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# “MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.”

BY

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SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD, A. M.

RECTOR OF CALVARY CHURCH, NEW-YORK.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

JOHN 14: 6.



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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND THE BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY,  
WHO COMMITTED TO ME  
"THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION,"  
WHO HAS BLESSED ME BY HIS COUNSEL,  
CHEERED ME BY HIS FAVOUR,  
AND ENCOURAGED ME BY HIS EXAMPLE,  
THIS HUMBLE EFFORT  
TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF THE REDEEMER,  
BOTH HIS AND MINE,  
IS  
(BY PERMISSION)  
MOST GRATEFULLY AND LOVINGLY  
DEDICATED,  
BY  
HIS SON.



Benj: T. Chivers  
New York, April 2. 1848.

## PREFACE.

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THE following Sermons are not a collection of occasional discourses, but were composed consecutively, and with reference to one end. They are designed to be an humble plea in behalf of the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and of His wisdom, manifested in the plan of our salvation; and an effort, however feeble, to promote His praise.

Like the text—the parts of which, though perfect in themselves, as statements of important facts, and branches of his argument, are necessary to complete the whole—these Sermons, having each its line of argument and illustration, form one plan.

I have sought, by frequent illustrations, to make the subject, and the mode of handling it, attractive to the minds whom I would reach. Perhaps, instead of weakening the arguments, they may have added to their force.

The *first* discourse maintains the theory that there not only are, but must be, “mysteries” in the plan of our salvation, it being the device of perfect wisdom, in a case where human intellect must have forever failed. It also defines the meaning of the term, in scriptural acceptation; and answers the objection, which is often raised, that there are *mysteries* in our religion.

The *second* gives the Scriptural and Catholic theory of the Incarnation, with proofs of the humanity and Deity of

Jesus Christ, and urges, against the objection that the doctrine is so wonderful, the *many* mysteries which are *received*.

The *third* presents the testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ, before and at the time of his appearing, and subsequent to his ascension ; which is the witness of the Holy Spirit, by whom our Lord was "*justified*."

The *fourth* supplies the testimony of the Angels, who are examined as to their knowledge of the Eternal Son, ever since their own creation, and their belief, or not, that *he* became the Son of man, still being perfect God.

The *fifth* maintains that Paul, in preaching to the Gentiles, on his own confession, preached "the unknown God;" and that "the unknown God," whom he declared, was *not* the God of *nature*, whose existence may be read upon its ample page, but the God of *grace*, in Jesus Christ ; where He is *most* "unknown."—It also shows the power which attends the preaching of the cross, to be itself a "mystery."

The *sixth* rescues the language of the text from what is thought to be a frigid and erroneous interpretation ; and shows, that the fact that the doctrine of the Incarnation was "believed on in the world," was not recorded by St. Paul, in this connexion, to assert, so much, the progress of the gospel, *as* to declare that its reception, under circumstances calculated to test its consonance with *reason*, and by men whose understandings were *enlightened* by the Spirit, proves it to be not only a divine, but *rational* Christianity.

The *last* displays the further evidence of his divinity, which is supplied by his *ascension*, and the benefits which we derive. Then follows the *summing-up* of all the testimony which has been produced. And it concludes with a concise and general *statement* of the plan of our salvation.

Imperfect as they are, I am thankful that they have been blessed already. And if now, by their publication, one soul

shall be redeemed from error, or one heart, which is already His, shall kindle with intenser love for "the only wise God, our Saviour," it will repay the most unworthy of His ministry, who craves to lay his offering upon the footstool of His throne.

S. L. S.

FESTIVAL OF THE PRESENTATION,  
New-York, 1848.



“MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.”

“ WITHOUT CONTROVERSY, GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS : GOD  
WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT, SEEN OF ANGELS,  
PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES, BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD, RECEIVED  
UP INTO GLORY.”

1 Timothy 3 : 16.

SERMON I.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and, in the power of the Divine Majesty, to worship the Unity; we beseech Thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

*Recd. - J. A. Perceval  
from the Author.*

## SERMON I.

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*"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness."*—1 TIM. 3 : 16.

I PROPOSE, dear brethren, a series of discourses, to be delivered as occasion shall permit, on the several members of the sentence of which our text is only the beginning—which is as follows: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." A passage in which, with the utmost graphic power, the Apostle has sketched the sum and substance of the Gospel, which is the narrative of the great work of our redemption, in its comprehensiveness and glory. For these brief expressions comprehend the history of all that Christ has done and suffered for our race—presenting us with all the important facts which are required for our comfort, and the assurance of our faith. And I know no more extraordinary passage—in which are gathered more important truths, to reward us for our constant study, and our patient contemplation.

It is like a painting of some master-hand, in which the casual observer, from a distance, may behold none but the bolder outlines, and those figures which appear most prominent, but where are hidden for the loving eye the minuter master-strokes of art and of devotion.

We gaze upon the bolder lines of this great picture, by the pencil of the Spirit, and soon it grows before us, and the dark portions are enlivened by a glory which is shed, we know not whence, upon the scene ; and one by one its most minute attractions are revealed, and every circumstance attending that mingled scene of tragic violence and self-devotion—of deep abasement and of exaltation—of the sufferings and patience, and the passion, and the death, the resurrection and ascent of Christ the Saviour of the world—is brought before us, and in all its cardinal features, and details of power and obedience, the plan, for the redemption of a ruined world, lives on the inspired page ! No careless, nor irreverent eye, no passing notice, may detect its numberless perfections. You must sit down, alone, instructed by the Spirit, or with you, as a friend and guide, some one to whom the oracles of God have been committed. Then shall your patient study be rewarded by a true appreciation and a more perfect knowledge of this work of Inspiration.

It is a landscape—in which the careless eye sees nothing but the cliffs or loftier mountains, which project upon the canvas, and whose vast dimensions and

unmeasured height create within no wish to tread the soil, or taste the delights of such a country ; while, if he would but stop, with patient gaze to scrutinize the picture, he would see, among those lofty hills, verdant and peaceful valleys defended from the violence of tempests, refreshed by streams of living waters ever descending from those fearful heights, and rejoicing in the shadows of the mountains ! He would see the evidences of prosperity ; and on a closer view, those hills whose tops were unregarded, would seem arrayed in glory—to extend into eternity—to penetrate into the presence of the Deity—and up their heights the steps, by which, at frequent intervals, are seen the stronger of the children of the valley, ascending into heaven !

Such is the sketch of Christianity by the Apostle ; and to each one of the features which compose it, I propose, in course, to direct the mental eye. On this occasion, your attention is to be confined to the first portion of this passage—which is descriptive of the whole—and is the general colouring into which all other shades are blended, and which gives a character to all.

The contemplation of this opening declaration, “Great is the mystery of godliness,” will prepare us to consider, one by one, the propositions which succeed it.

“Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.” By “godliness” is here intended, not that conformity to the will of God, and imitation of

his virtues, which in the practice of mankind is sometimes meant by this expression ; but the manifestation of God in all the characters of the Messiah, and in all the work of the Redeemer. It is not so much Godlikeness, which is the sense when used of Christian character, as the development, by God the Son, and execution of the plan for the salvation of the world, which is described in the phrases, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." These facts, (for they are facts,) these actions of the ever-blessed Son of God, (for they are his achievements,) these manifestations of God's condescension, and his power, in the atonement of the Son, and in the free course and triumphant progress of the gospel,—compose the "godliness" which is intended.

And by "the mystery" is meant, that that which has indeed occurred, and is recorded, is most wonderful—passing the knowledge and ability, the science and experience of man ; and passing human understanding. It is inexplicable upon human principles, requiring a superhuman agency, and brought about in opposition to the calculations of mankind. Such is a mystery in the sense of Holy Scripture—when any thing is done by the exercise of God's omnipotence, and effects are brought about by causes which, to us, are insufficient. The mystery may vary in degree, from the life of the lowest of his creatures, to the nature and existence of a Triune God. And among the

wonderful things which are recorded in the Bible, the “mystery of godliness” is great—exceeding many of the wonderful and mighty works which God is ever doing in our midst, as that transaction must exceed in dignity the achievements of mankind, in which the actor was himself the eternal Son of God!

Let it be borne in mind, a mystery is no absurdity—no contradiction of our reason, from which we should recoil; but something, proposed, or else accomplished, which is beyond our power, but is possible with God. Men shrink from mysteries, and will insist that there can be no mystery in our religion—and, if they were the horrid and irrational rites which their misguided fancies have created, I should condemn them too. But let us not reject the truths of revelation, and denounce the system which God’s wisdom has invented, and forego the most invaluable graces of the Holy Spirit, through ignorance of terms. A mystery is something wonderful; and, in its lawful sense, applies to every act of the Omnipotent.

And the facts and truths of Christianity are charged with mystery—for it is against this characteristic of the gospel that mankind object. It is too wonderful—too little like the systems of the world—too far superior in dignity and in design to man’s imaginations—and founded upon facts the like of which were never known in their experience! Forgetting that it claims to be descended from above, they think it wrong because it bears so little likeness to the things of earth! We are met by this objection at the outset, and

through the publication of the gospel; and almost as often as we give it "line upon line" and "precept upon precept." We scarce can preach a doctrine among those which lie at the foundation of our faith, but here and there some "evil heart of unbelief" rejects the "mystery!" The nature of the Deity we worship, three persons and one God—the separate personality of the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit—the theory of the divinity of Christ, and his humanity—his miraculous conception—his mission as Messiah, though rejected by God's people—his omnipotence kept in abeyance, while subject to the malice of mankind—his resurrection and ascent in human form—his kingdom and dominion as the Son of God and son of man—the efficacy of his death—and his perpetual mediation—all these are set aside as mysteries, transcending human understanding. And it is urged by the opponents of the gospel (under which name I class all those who, from a want of faith, do not obey its precepts), that God would surely suit his revelation to the understandings and capacities of men. And human reason, contemplating only such a God as we ourselves, and most absurdly arguing from the creature to that very creature's own Creator, is prone to sanction the objection, while, by the verdict, she is robbing him of his superiority, and of all that renders him a God! I call it reason, because they term it thus who hold to such conclusions, although the process is fallacious, and the conclusion is a libel on the noblest faculty of man. This is the

practical assumption of ungodly men. They first assume that Christianity, as represented in the Bible, will be, in all respects, adapted to their understanding, and correspond to their imaginations. And then they charge upon it mystery, and so are justified, in their esteem, either in disobedience of individual orders, or the denial of its peculiar doctrines, or its rejection as a whole, according to the degree of their impiety, and the rancour of their evil heart of unbelief. Hence are derived the most effectual arguments against it; the most effectual encouragements in disobedience; and the bitterest mockery and most malignant sneers of the friends and the inheritors of hell! Hence are derived the arguments which turn aside the simple from his way, and keep him back from happiness and heaven.

My brethren, let not the gospel, as a record of the works of the Redeemer, be misunderstood. So far am I from undertaking to deny the charge, or to explain all mysteries, that, as a minister of Christ, I boldly claim that the facts of the Bible are most wonderful, and the doctrines of the Christian's faith are plainly written for our learning, but, in themselves, mysterious. The Bible comes not as a book asserting nothing which is above our knowledge, or beyond our comprehension; for it would be unworthy of the Deity, and fail to exercise and put in proof, that faith, which is, on our part, the only agent of our reformation, and the mighty instrument of our salvation. The plan of the atonement does not come

to us as one which human wit might have discovered, for then our own salvation would have been within our reach, and there had been no need of the counsels of the Godhead, or the amazing condescension of the Saviour, or the unearthly pangs of the Redeemer, or the "mystery" of the atonement. But requiring, as it did, the wisdom, the purity, the power, and benevolence of God, to devise and carry out the plan of our redemption, it is most evident, that a scheme which required for its origin a wisdom so much greater than our own, could not, in all its parts be level to our comprehension; else were the wisdom and the love of God no greater than our own, which yet were insufficient to devise the way in which he could be just and justify the sinner! I hold that by the soundest principles of human logic, as well as in accordance with the sentiments of inspiration, there either must have been a "mystery" in the atonement, or, there had been no atonement! And if that holy volume be a fable, it is the noblest work of man, and answers perfectly, in every part, to the best requirements of an enlightened reason; and in the midst of the productions of the universal race of man, it stands alone, in glory—and I will take it, as the best of books, to guide me through the paths of life, to comfort me in death, and fill my mind in the last hours of existence, and before I sink into forgetfulness forever, and the light of intellect goes out in everlasting night, with its imaginary paradise, and its fictitious scenes of future and eternal peace, and rest, and joy.

And is the gospel, or rather, (for I would not be misapprehended where all depends on the clear perception of the point at issue, and a certain knowledge of the ground which is assumed,) is Christianity as a religious system, is Christ in all his various relations to mankind, and all his deeds and sufferings, his trials and his triumphs as recorded in the Bible, and presented to mankind for their reception and obedience, justly obnoxious to the charge? Are his doctrines wonderful, and the facts related, on which our whole religion rests, mysterious, beyond our comprehension? Is Christ a mystery? Is Christianity a mystery? And does the religion of the Son of God abound in mysteries? Are we the "ambassadors for Christ," the "stewards of his mysteries?" Do you partake of "holy mysteries?" And is the union of us all with Christ, "bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh," some living on the earth, some with the temples of their bodies now dismantled in the grave, and their immortal spirits in the "paradise" of God, and Christ himself, here in the believer's heart, and there upon his throne in heaven—is this a mystery? Is it a "mystery" that God became incarnate, born of a woman, and suffered the death of a transgressor? Is it a "mystery" that you shall be baptized with water, and the holy flood shall wash away the soul's defilement, and leave embedded in the heart, to grow up to a tree of righteousness, the seed of spiritual life? Is it a "mystery" that you shall break the bread and drink the wine of the great sa-

crament, and thereby die with him upon the cross ; that therein, you shall eat and drink by faith the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, to every purpose of his passion ? Is it a “mystery” that angels throng the courts of this, the dwelling place of God, and, even now, we worship with the hosts of heaven before the mercy-seat, and only need the removal of the veil of our mortality, which yet obscures the light, to look direct upon the radiance, which, emanating from the throne, fills, with its lustre, all the universe but hell—and only want the opening of the ear of sense to hear the melodies of heaven ? I know—I feel, we walk so near the confines of eternity, that I have sometimes paused, upon the shore of time, to listen for the strains which holy angels play upon their harps of gold, and thought that I could see them at their minstrelsy ; and, (but for the loud clangour of this world’s discordant sounds, which drowned the harmony of heaven,) the strain had reached mine ear ! And as I wander on, amid the turmoil and the strife of this world’s occupations, and the trembling air is burdened with the mingled roar of trade and tribulation, and with the louder shouts of pastime and of passion, mine ear is ever cherishing the imagined sweetness of the angel’s tone, and ever open for some living echo of the strains, which are struck in that better and peaceful land ! And only once again ; is it a “mystery” that you shall die, and live again—that, at the trump of God, the flesh, which shall have been corrupted by decay, and kept for centuries be-

neath the monumental guard which faith and friendship have erected to watch over its repose, or been consigned a helpless captive, far down the ocean's depths, in some dark cave almost unfathomed by the lead of solar light, or, locked in the embraces of the sepulchre, shall, in an instant, with resistless power, part the ocean's waves, and heave, as if a feather's weight, the monumental pile, and break the iron bars, or roll away the stone which kept the entrance of the sepulchre? May we deny the charge? Nay, these are "mysteries," and we must answer with the Apostle Paul, that "the mystery of godliness is great."

Then, "without controversy," the "mystery of godliness" is great. We do not pretend that it is not; we even assert that it is. And we come to you, "as ambassadors for Christ," not with the boasted conclusions of our own understanding, not with the noblest achievements of human intellect, not with the gatherings of our experience, but with a revelation from above, in language plain enough for you to read what has been written, and asserting what you cannot understand, but are not able to deny. We come to you, bearing in our unworthy hands the oracles of God, and demanding, as no favour unto us, but on your peril, and as justice unto God, that you believe its truths, in order that you may obey. The facts are mysterious. This volume is a temple, designed by the "Father of lights," and erected by

Him who fashioned the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars! Its maker and builder is God; and we claim for it only the perfection and glory which belong to the rest of his works. It is the message of the "mysterious," the inscrutable God; and we cannot accept as your answer, when we call upon you to be saved by the blood of the Saviour, the declaration, which is not disputed, of the mystery of the fact of atonement. Away, then, with the mockery of the unbeliever, and the scorn of the scorner; it recoils upon him! It is as rational to require that God should bound his own nature by the nature of man, as to make the plan of atonement like the devices of men. It is as rational to object to the truths of Christianity, because they are wonderful, when they claim to be so, as to object to benevolence because it is kind, when it claims to be charity itself! Ah! the scorner may delight for a while in his scorning—for it is his hour and the power of darkness—but the time is at hand, when the Almighty shall "laugh at his calamity, and mock when his fear cometh," and "the righteous shall have dominion over him in the morning!"

Take heed, then, with what spirit you open the Scriptures, or listen to the ambassadors of Christ and "stewards of His mysteries," when they publish his marvellous word. With no pride of intellect, come, but in humble unquestioning faith; not with the spirit which subjects to the test of man's knowledge

the revelation from heaven, but that which, assured, from external evidence, of the origin of the Bible, takes all of its statements as true ; which believes, though the oracle be sealed ; which obeys, no matter what the command ; which at least will attempt the injunction, though it were the conflict with devils, or the removing of mountains, or the wresting the stars from the sky ! But there is nothing recorded which was not enacted, there is nothing commanded which cannot be done. But you cannot expect to commend it to the minds of ungodly men ; and you cannot expect that its wisdom will be always approved by your own. And beware how you profanely compare it with the knowledge of men, how you dare to reject it, when its wisdom shall vary from the wisdom of men. Behold, I show you a “mystery,” a wonderful thing, when I tell you of the incarnation of Jesus, and the redemption by his blood ; and yet on your faith in the doctrine, your salvation depends ! Behold, I show you a mystery,” for the seed which thou sowest shall die, and be quickened again ! Behold, I show you a “mystery,” for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, never to die ! And yet, if ye will hope to escape from damnation, and attain to the first resurrection, you must believe in the “mystery of godliness,” that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead ! “O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !”

We but share with the angels their ignorance of his ways, till the time when the light of eternity shall reveal as much as even spirits may know of the mysteries of redeeming love, which are "the deep things of God."

SERMON II.

GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH.

Almighty and Everlasting God, who, of thy tender love toward mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same J  sus Christ our Lord.

## SERMON II.

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*"God was manifest in the flesh."*—1 TIMOTHY 3: 16.

LET us sit down, dear brethren, before this painting, by the pencil of the Spirit, of the more general characters of which we have already made our observations, showing, in the words of the Apostle, that "the mystery of godliness is great," or else (in language which will be in keeping with the illustration which we used the other day, and to which we briefly, now, allude again,) that on the inspired canvas, mystery, or wonderfulness, is the general colouring into which all other shades are blended. And now, that the mental eye has looked at large, and with delight, on its projecting figures, grouped as they are before us, and its pervading tone, which, of themselves, are all sufficient to suggest to every "single eye" its origin, and to betray the pencil of the Spirit; let us attempt to study one, and only one, of the main features which the Holy Spirit has so boldly drawn on the inspired page, with more of calmness, and without, if possible, the rapturous emotion which the contemplation of it, as a whole, is calculated to

create ; and which is well deserved, indeed, by all that we are able to discover and appreciate of its intrinsic merit. To estimate it fairly, would require the fulness of perfected knowledge, and the vision of an angel, and the light which beams in holier climes—the radiance of the throne ; while we are only able to regard it in the dubious light of this low world, and with imperfect sight, and through the film of human prejudice, and the veil of sin. Yet notwithstanding, and under all these disadvantages, let it be our endeavour to study and to master it, as fully as we may. And as, while gazing at the whole, a light is shed upon the scene, revealing the minuter features of the plan, so that the hidden beauties of the piece seem to forsake the privacy and the seclusion in which the artist placed them, and in which they love to dwell, and to come out and meet us, crossing “the line of shadow and of sunshine,” that they may come within the range of our imperfect vision, and stand arrayed in the same glory which is cast upon the whole ; so now, while our attention shall be riveted upon this single object, which is the fact, that “God was manifested in the flesh,” we shall be able, not only to discover the elements and vastness of the figure, but its own minuter excellences shall in time become illumined, and approach us, as the ascending sun of human knowledge casts its rays into the recesses and the slopes, and undulations of the mountain.

And, as in every picture which is not a libel upon

art, the most commanding object, from its size and other attributes, engages the attention first,—so the Apostle, here, has placed the first in the enumeration of the facts and doctrines, which make up the landscape, the greatest mystery, the most gigantic truth, at which the enemies of the divinity of Christ are most offended,—the loftiest peak upon the ridge of “mysteries”—the mountain of the incarnation—whose summit (though the eye can reach to where its sides are first illumined by the glory of a higher world) is lost to human sight, in the illimitable space which stretches ever on toward the dwelling-place of God, or else, amid the lighter clouds which serve, by fold on fold of purest white, to screen the regions of eternity from time, and the mansions of the Deity from man! This doctrine is indeed a mountain, which shelters from the tempests of God’s wrath, an erring and defenceless race—and behold, I show to you a mystery—its structure and its elements are such as mark the everlasting hills—it is composed of earth (which is the emblem of humanity, which Christ assumed) and of the “Rock of Ages!” God “was manifest in flesh.”

Now we may assume without dispute, I trust, that all this language is applied to Jesus Christ—that the scene is meant to represent his character, and sufferings, and his achievements for our race—for of no other one in all the annals of mankind have these things ever been asserted, and by any been believed. It has not been pretended that in any other one

among mankind, God has, in the order of these several propositions, and in any lawful sense which may be given to the language, been manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. An effort has indeed been made, to make the subject of all these assertions, not the Saviour, but the gospel which he preached; as if, in any sense which is not palpably absurd, the gospel can be manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, received up into glory! The language can be sensibly applied, only to Christ, the subject of the gospel, working out the mysterious plan of our salvation. And it is apparent, that the reason why this forced and strange interpretation has been given, by the enemies of "the truth as it is in Jesus," is, that they saw, that if it were taken in its obvious meaning, it would most unquestionably teach (what it was meant to teach) the divinity of Jesus Christ! One thing at least the authors and abettors of such an interpretation do effect, which is to make the truth a "mystery," as, of the gospel being manifest in flesh, and seen of angels, and received up into glory!—which is, what they desire to avoid—and which, after all, is not so much a "mystery," as a contradiction of our reason, and an absurdity. Need I say that we reject it? Your minds, no doubt, already have forecasted the conclusion, and made it as your own decision.

These words are spoken, then, of Jesus Christ,

throughout the members of this passage, and hence the words, which meet us first, and which we are considering to-day. And here arises the objection of the adversary of the "Lord Jesus," and his Church; and here alone is need of argument; for if we can establish or believe, that, God, himself, in his own individuality and person, did become incarnate, however we may wonder, with adoring awe, at what is afterwards recorded, the subsequent assertions being less mysterious, will demand but little argument upon their truth. Here is the main defence of infidelity; and if the castle, the strong-hold, the capitol be taken and be held, the weaker points, (although perhaps more beautiful in climate and in scenery,) can make but small defence, and resistance, elsewhere, will be faint! So, in the case before us, the demonstration of the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ (I mean his personal existence and divinity from all eternity) involves the carrying and possession of the points, or truths which lie beyond it, or by which it is surrounded!

What is the meaning then of this assertion, "God was manifest in the flesh?" Is not the language unequivocal and direct—and, as it stands, (having already ascertained, what is not now disputed, that whatever be the meaning of his language here, the Apostle wrote, what he has written, concerning Jesus Christ,) is it not evident, that a mind unprejudiced, which has no theory already to support, must take it as asserting that Jesus Christ was God—that "he

was in the Father, and the Father was in him?" The Apostle here is speaking, (it will be conceded,) of the presence in, and the union of some other nature, or another person, with, the "flesh," the humanity of the person who is here the subject of discourse, who is, (confessedly, whether he be alleged to be divine or human,) "the man Christ Jesus;" and speaking of that flesh, (for bear in mind that the expression in the text "the flesh" is conceded to denote, not our humanity in general, but that peculiar individual, who is recognized respectively, as "Jesus of Nazareth" and "Christ" and "Jesus Christ," "the Saviour," and "the Son of Man,") speaking of that "flesh," that body, that corporeal being, that humanity, the Apostle plainly, (we might almost call it bluntly,) says, that God was in him, and was manifestly in him—or, in other words, that he was God. I do maintain, that such is the only natural and plain meaning of this language, by all the established rules of logical interpretation.

This charge, alone, if followed up, will take the castle, and the adversary will at length be forced to a surrender, unless he means to perish, in his works, by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." But since he has displayed against this fair interpretation, all his power, and seems to be making, here, his main defence, as if he thought that this one charge embraces all the force at our disposal,—and for the sake of mercy, to convince him before the ruin overtakes him, that defence will be impossible,

I shall bring up yet other divisions of the forces to make the victory appear inevitable—while, still, (apparently with undiminished numbers,) the inspired forces of the kingdom are resting in reserve, armed with “the whole armour of God.” It were a vain and merciless proceeding, to array the hosts of passages, which are equipped with weapons for this warfare, against a single point, however well defended. It were a needless thing to summon, to surround a fort, manned by a handful of brave men, however reckless of their danger, the entire forces of a kingdom which is “everlasting.” The rest shall storm, in turn, whatever other points may be discovered, where infidelity has rallied.

The Saviour, and the holy band of his Apostles, have called the Christian life a warfare—we are termed the soldiers of the kingdom—when we were first enrolled in holy Baptism we were signed with the sign of the cross, “in token that hereafter we should not be ashamed to fight manfully under the banner of Christ, against sin, the world, and the devil”—we are exhorted to “put on the whole armour of God”—and we hesitate not to speak of “the noble army of martyrs,” who have died in defence of the truth—and “the word of God is called the sword of the Spirit.” You will pardon me, then, if (in justice to the figure which we have begun) I array the subsequent forces under the general authority of those from whose writings the texts are produced, for I

desire to give all of the glory to them, and, through them, to the Spirit of God.

Now, the enemy also expects that disagreement in the ranks will hinder the success of our arms, but there is a perfect unity which prevails among all of the host, and they move on to the support of each other.

First of all, saith the Almighty, by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, "thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, (and who is Christ but Israel's king, the king of the Jews?) and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, (and who but Christ is confessed to have been, in some way, the Redeemer?) I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God!" And again, "I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour!" Then St. Peter declares that "our Lord and Saviour, is Jesus Christ!"

Then, the Saviour himself beareth witness, "I and my Father are one"—one in origin, one in existence and knowledge, one in the power of miracles and the wisdom of God.

Then, St. John, the Apostle, declares, that "He was manifested and came in the flesh, who was the Son of God."

Then St. Paul to the Romans, "He that was God, blessed for evermore, was also of the seed of David, according to the flesh." And again, to the Colossians, "He was filled with all the fulness of God." Again, to the Philippians, "He who was in

the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God."

And then St. John, in his Gospel, which was written after all, as if to put an end to the matter which is now in discussion, "the Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God."

These are all that I shall bring—all the battle I shall set in array against the citadel of the foe. These are more than enough to accomplish the victory, and, sooner or later, they shall hang out "the banner of Christ" from its walls, to be hailed by the shouts of the "soldiers of God," and the eyes and the hearts of a ransomed world, with its inscription, "Jehovah is Jesus, and Christ is the Saviour, and the Saviour is God!!"

Another truth now awaits your attention, which, however, has been somewhat involved in what has already been said, that God was "incarnate," "born of a woman," "made in the likeness of man." Indeed, it is bound up with the first term of the proposition before us, for God and humanity compose the wonderful being of whom the declaration is made.

Where the union of natures is such and so close, that one person embraces them both, it must be that the decision of one part of the sentence affirming the fact, will necessarily prejudge the other; so it follows, at once, the assertion, that it was God who was made flesh, that God was incarnate. And inasmuch as the humanity of Christ is not disputed, and is equally sustained, with the divinity of the Saviour,

in the passages which I have quoted, I am content to leave it, with only the statement of the perfectness of the humiliation and, at the same time, his freedom from guilt.

It is enough, then, to state that he became verily man, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was born, as we are born, into the life of this world. He took our nature upon him, with all of its frailties, sin only excepted. He suffered more than all that humanity can bear, sustained by the power and by the angels of God, giving proof, by the hardships he suffered, and the pangs he endured, of the reality of his humiliation, and a pledge that he could be touched with a feeling of our infirmities—and, “He was made sin for us who knew no sin.” And to recur, for a moment, to the similitude of a mountain, to which I likened this doctrine in the beginning, the adversary will allow that it is built of inferior earth, but denies that the mountain abounds with the rock which gives it its form, and glory, and worth, even the “Rock of Ages.” But without it, the pile would be washed away, as the mounds of earth, by the flood ; while, because it is also built of the rock which endures, it shall ever remain the Ararat of our hopes, on which the ark of God’s Church shall be resting while the billows of life are surging around it, and when the last eminence of time is submerged in the limitless sea of eternity !

But why was all this ? For we cannot pass over the object of this condescension. For what was the

Almighty incarnate? What errand brought him down from the sky? What condition of things could demand that he should "empty himself of his glory," and take up with a manger, instead of a throne, and a cross, and a purple robe, and a crown of thorns, instead of the mansions of glory, and his raiment of light, and the emblems of his power? Alas, let the heart of each one of us all confess the solution. I will not tell of the transgression in Eden, nor how the earth has been full of violence, and the soil on which men are dependent, has been stained by their blood. I will not tell, how, in ages gone by, the rebellion of man has opened the vials of wrath, and drowned the earth with a flood. I will not tell, how the Son of the Highest, when he came, was "reviled and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—how he suffered the death of transgressors, while the accents of pity were heard in his anguish, and the words of compassion and mercy, fell from his lips—nor how that strange crucifixion, while it purchased the forfeited souls of mankind, brought down on the nation who cast him away, the bitterest curse which was ever inflicted on earth, which the captivity and unending distress of more than five thousand generations of men, has not fulfilled, nor the lapse of ages on ages wasted away. But I appeal to the heart, which now lives, and now beats in the breast of each one, for the cause of this amazing condescension, and sorrow, and shame. It is the iniquity

of which we have been guilty—it is the rebellion of those who now live on the earth. And as we stand at the foot of the cross, to contemplate that wonderful scene, unless the heart has been hardened to stone, and every fountain of feeling is closed, our head will be waters, and our eyes fountains of tears ; and the half suppressed groan of the spirit, will be uttering language like this : “ for us, men, and for our salvation ”—O God, have mercy upon us—have mercy—have mercy upon us !

And once more, this indwelling of God in the flesh, was manifested to men ; for such is the unequivocal language before us. Not inhabiting there in an undefined and mysterious way, so that no man could know of his presence, but so evidently, manifestly there, that all men might know and believe. He was shown by his works—they bore witness of him—for he said, if ye believe not me, believe the works which I do. And well did they testify of him, when he healed the sick, and cleansed the lepers, and opened the eyes of the blind ; when he cast out the devils, and raised up the dead, and foretold them the things that should be ; when he did “ the works which none other man did,” and “ spake as never man spake,” and suffered, as only God can endure. What was it, but the manifestation of God, which compelled the adoration of men ? What was it, but the manifestation of God, which made the devils obey ? What was it, but the manifestation of God, in the

proofs of his crucified body being raised from the dead, which extorted from incredulous Thomas, the words, "My Lord and my God?"

Then, is not "the mystery of godliness great?" Is not this one fact, of the incarnation of God, a wonderful thing? Does it not exceed and surpass the utmost devices of men? Does not the fact, which you dare not deny, overreach and baffle the comprehension of man? Tell me, ye men who ridicule the thought that there are wonderful things in the Bible—whose loftiness of intellect is such, that ye can measure the Almighty with a span—the compass of whose intellect is such that it embraces all—to whom the ways of God himself, his movements through the circle of eternity, are but as tracks upon the sands of human life—who, beyond your fellows and beyond angelic power, can pierce the veil which hides the secret things belonging unto God—and whose profundity of mind is such, that the "deep things of God," where angels cannot fathom, are but as shallows where your gigantic intellects may wade—before the magic influence of whose acumen, all difficulties cease, all mysteries dissolve, as vanish from before the sun, the shades of night and mists of early morn—who travel on, where even inspiration falters, and stand unmoved where the Apostles trembled, and whose admission to the skies, the hosts of heaven wait, to be instructed, by you, in the lore to which the cherubim and seraphim are strangers, though clothed with immortality—tell me, I say, if ye can

find no mystery around you? no wonder-working power in the life in which the universe, and all that therein is, has been, and is sustained? Tell me, ye men of understanding, is there no mystery in human parentage, and human birth? Is there no mystery, no exercise of God's omnipotence, withdrawn from human sight, in that anterior life, which ripens to existence at the dawn of our nativity? Is there no mystery in the alleged conception of the Virgin, only betrothed? none in the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit? none in the fact that God became incarnate? God, gathered in the bounds of human nature? God, wrapped about with garments of an earthly texture? God, folded in the arms of human friendship? God, buffeted and smitten with a reed? none in immensity embraced within an atom—the expanse of heaven, crowded in the compass of the earth—eternity in the least part of time?

Alas! for you, if ye can fathom depths like these, and comprehend all mysteries, what is there yet in store for you, when God shall roll away the clouds of sense, and we shall put on immortality? What prospect is before you? What hope of something yet to come, shall serve you as an anchor of the soul, in the restless heaving of life's waters, and the storms of human passion? By what promises of increase and of glory, shall your longing souls be satisfied? your bosoms be consoled?

Dear brethren—let others mock at mysteries, and meet the scorner's doom! For us, our imperfections

of knowledge and of character, but point us to futurity, where "just men are made perfect;" and, if we have but faith in revelation, the twilight of our present ignorance is eloquent of the approaching dawn of an eternal day! "For, now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known."



SERMON III.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

O God, who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

## SERMON III.

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*"Justified in the Spirit."*—1 TIMOTHY 3: 16.

DEAR BRETHREN—on the resumption of this subject, let us acknowledge our indebtedness to God, for his kind preservation. While we have paused to return our thanks to God, for all the mercies of the year, to draw, from the review of all his benefits, reproof of our ingratitude, and stimulus to greater holiness of living, as well as greater thankfulness of heart; and paused again to take account of time, as a new year has opened on the Church; and paused to bid you bear in mind the wonderful decease of Jesus Christ, accomplished on Mount Cavalry, for us, and our salvation, and to comply with his command to keep the feast, which he has ordered in commemoration of his death, and so to watch for his appearing; while we have paused, to feed you with far better than the husks of man's invention, than the words of human wisdom, even with "the bread which came from heaven," to make a sacrifice to God, and offer incense to his name, upon our holy hill; to catch, from the last point of time, the tidings of the great

achievement, and light another signal-fire, which shall proclaim still further on, the mighty struggle of the Son of Man, and his great victory—while, in obedience to his command, and in the exercise of ghostly strength imparted at the time of our commission and now sustained by the Almighty Spirit standing by to help, we have been labouring to mould your spirits in the “quick-forged and working-house” of the great sacrament, and by a sacramental energy, to weld them on the chain of souls, which reaches back through all the ages of the saints, and which the Son of Man at last shall take, while every link shall be refined from dross, and shine with immortality, and wear it in his kingdom—while thus we have obeyed the call of God’s own Spirit, by his gracious Providence we have been all preserved, and the angel of destruction has passed by!

We thank him, that he has permitted us to come again, within the temple of the sacred volume, which is hung round and is adorned with countless paintings, by the Spirit, representing to our mortal sight, the scenes of earth, and unexplored and boundless regions of eternity; portraying, for our learning and delight, the barrenness of that vast wilderness in which we rove, the “wilderness of sin,” and the fertility and beauty of our future heritage, to lure us to the skies—and representing to the life, in all its feebleness and insignificance, our poor humanity, contrasted with the stupendous and unmeasured height of all the attributes of Deity; and even

shadowing forth the joys of which we cannot altogether now conceive, and admitting to our feeble sight, some little of the "light which no man may approach unto."

See, where, upon one side, there hangs the dark and disinal portraiture of human guilt, relieved by but one ray of hope, which plays alone amid the darkness, even the promise of redemption.

And, on another, where appears the tragic scene of the atonement—the death of Christ, and in his death his victory—where light and darkness, for a while, are struggling for the mastery, but where the mingled gloom leads on to greater darkness, and then, to where the Sun of righteousness, just now eclipsed, emerges from the night, and bathes creation in his flood of living light, and dissipates the gloom!

See, where there hangs in yet another place, the portraiture of heaven and of hell—in which, by contrast, heaven is brighter by the night of hell, and hell is darker by the light of heaven—and each is filled with spirits of angelic form who stand arrayed in glory, or else are dimly seen moving upon their errand of darkness, and of death!

See, where there hangs, in still another place, in colours of true life, the long procession of the earlier saints, with aspect gentle and benign—where Adam and Abraham, with their associates, appear, when yet the term of human life had not been shortened by transgression, but in the hoary head was seen,

“the dawning of another life, which even here broke over their horizon !”

And then, a little further on, behold a nation, wearing the chain of bondage, and the livery of their captivity—and, by the river’s bank, the homeless minstrels of Jerusalem ; whose harps (now hung upon the willows which are weeping with them in their lot, and sympathizing with them in the depth of their calamity) are useless, (even if their hearts could have awaked a song and melody in their heaviness,) for the cords are moistened by the tears of their captivity, and, like the heart-strings of the captives, are relaxed, and their virtue and their music has departed : —and see how heaven itself is habited in clouds as weeds of mourning, and how the waters hush their anthem, and pass quietly and silently along, respecting their affliction !

And then, upon the other side, (for to the Spirit, past and present and to come are all alike, and live as in the compass of to-day,) behold a scene of universal violence—the host of the believers, whose weapons are not carnal, and whose kingdom is not of this world, flying before the sword of persecution—see plains and valleys red and fertile with the blood of saints—see heaven darkened with the smoke of human hecatombs, and fitfully illumined by the flames of martyrdom—while, here and there, are seen the crosses of Apostles, worthy to suffer death upon the tree, and imitate the crucifixion !

And then, upon the other side, a peaceful valley

of repose—where multitudes are dwelling in security, where the little ones are sanctified, and manhood's self is meek, and the aged are all happy—most wholesome is the climate of the valley,

“And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,  
Like the protecting hand of God, inverted above them.”

And then, a little further on, the last great contest of the saints, with the ranks of those who war against the Almighty, in which the tide of the invaders of God's kingdom, rolls back again to hell, the deep of angry passions, and the home of sorrow's waves!

And then, just near the holy place, the long procession of the saints of every age, upon the resurrection morn, which passes on, as the “gates” of glory “lift their heads,” and amid the fullest, longest, loudest, sweetest minstrelsy of angels, and the chorus of the saints, the “King of glory” with his retinue of shining and immortal spirits, enters in! Be still—for you are in the temple of the Deity, and every where, the master-works of inspiration live around you on its walls!

My brethren, we have pointed you to but a few of the great works around you, and yet we may have seemed to “linger in the temple.” But, how could I refrain from speaking hastily of these, as we proceeded to the one which we have been considering, which is the Altar-piece in the vast temple of the Scriptures, and among the noble works of super-human art, by which it is surrounded? Yes, we have

lingered through the temple, (and I would, I would to God that we might dwell for ever there,) and my delay must have encroached upon the time which we can give to the consideration of this piece, whose study we have been permitted to resume. But still I trust that we shall be more fitted to estimate it fairly, by the rapid survey of some other works by which the temple is adorned. And happy shall I be, if the indulgence of my ecstasy shall make you often to revisit it, and love the Bible more!

Come, then, and sit down with me here, in quiet contemplation.

You will remember, that we have discussed the general colouring, in the declaration that "the mystery of godliness is great"—and the most prominent of all the features of the piece, the boldest, loftiest peak upon the ridge of mysteries, the mountain of the incarnation—in the saying, "God was manifested in the flesh." And now your attention must be given to the words, he "was justified in the Spirit"—being the light by which the figures gain their prominence, and the whole has been revealed! With admirable skill (for another order might perhaps have been adopted) the Apostle places next to the great fact of the Saviour's incarnation, his "justification in the Spirit"—and this testimony of the Spirit (given at various times, which we shall presently consider) is that which reveals the fact of the atonement, and fixes, in all respects, the character of the Messiah—and is the light of truth, streaming from heaven, by

which the landscape is made visible and plain ! And, true to nature, as to art, he leads us now to speak of revelation, or the witness of the Spirit, as, after contemplating the boldest feature of a plan, we naturally turn and say, “How well the light is shed upon the scene ! how it makes the mountain loom in simple majesty, above the undulations of the plain !”

Now, this light of revelation, you perceive, falls not at once, from all the dome of heaven, but, through the fissures of the clouds, (when visions were vouchsafed, and graces have descended,) at intervals, it shines in mellowed richness, and in softened splendour, and melts away on either hand, into the shadows of the intervening clouds.

The periods and modes in which this testimony has been given, are these—the “prophecies which went before”—the testimony of the Spirit, while Christ was manifested in the flesh—and since, in the fulfilment of his promise to the Church, (dependent on the truth of his divinity, and union with the flesh,) by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, on every generation. And as, when shining from the zenith, the rays which are refracted, or pass obliquely through the clouds, on either hand, are milder than the rays which fall directly on the earth—so, too, the testimony, which was given by the Spirit, before and subsequent to the event, though clear enough to reveal the truth to our perception, is gentler than the blaze of noonday, at the time of his humiliation ! And surely, if we shall find, rather, if it be so, that inspi-

ration, both before, and at the time, and since the incarnation, has testified (now testifies, for it is shining still) to its reality—that mountain truth must grow in our esteem, and assume its just proportions, and become a shelter, from the tempests of God's wrath, for our defenceless race.

First, then, this light is shed from the “prophecies which went before”—and how constant is this testimony of the Spirit, recurring through all the prophecies of those who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost!” How uniform the witness which they bear to what should be the character of the Messiah! No circumstance, however trifling, failed to be predicted, from his conception of a Virgin, to his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven :—(the time of his approach—the manger for his cradle—his obedience and sufferings—his grave with the rich, and his death with the transgressors—his name implying not alone his errand, but his everlasting Sonship, and his right to all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily—his nature in all attributes complete, as Son of God, and Son of Man—) and clear enough, though mild in the comparison, for those to whom it was addressed, and for whose instruction it was given, to see, and know, and understand the office and the attributes, the full humanity and perfect deity of Him, of whom the prophets wrote: and, while they prophesied of him, the works of wonder which they wrought, by the assistance of the Spirit, bore testimony to the inspiration of the prophecies which they

delivered. And so the Saviour, when he came into the world, bade them to "search the Scriptures—for in them," said he, "ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me." But the time would fail me now, to quote for you the language of those Scriptures, to which the Saviour has appealed—nor is it needed—for they are ever with you, and I trust you know them well. I can only follow in the line of that appeal, and bid you search them for yourselves—and see, that if some of the lesser prophets, with but a dubious light, and insufficient, if alone, shine on this truth, Isaiah throws a clearer ray on all the character of the Messiah. If they but keep alive a gentler note, and give the under-song of prophecy, Isaiah strikes a bolder strain upon the golden harp of inspiration. And while, as if too far away, their feebler notes scarce reach, if unaccompanied by stronger tones, the listening ear, (with undiminished strength, and beauty, and distinctness,) his fuller harmonies are borne upon the gale, or float upon the tranquil sea of time, (whose waves have sunk to rest, since they were troubled by the storm, and since the tempest of the present has swept on to vex the coming time, and left them in the past ;) or else, come down the track of memory, to fill the chambers of the mind ! And Malachi, so near the advent of Messiah, and, with his distinct annunciation of the coming of Elias, is, as a solitary ray, for which the cloud is rent, not far from where the sun, with a full disk, shines out upon the world !

We come, now, to the testimony of the Spirit, at the time of his sojourn on earth, and his humiliation. But how shall I recount the throng of merciful and mighty works, by which the power and benevolence of God, “showed forth themselves in him?” How can I tell the amount of testimony? It is contained in his miraculous conception—in every circumstance of his eventful life, answering to the predictions of the prophets. It is contained in his miraculous knowledge—which is the gift of God to none but the deserving—for it is written that, not only at the age of twelve, without the opportunities for other knowledge than children may acquire, he confounded all the doctors of the law, but it is frequently repeated, on the authority of inspiration, that he knew what was in man, and saw what was impossible for human sight, and knew beforehand all that should come to pass. It consists moreover in the voice of God the Father, proclaiming his relationship to him, and owning Christ to be His Son—and in the Spirit himself descending, as a dove, to rest upon him, at the moment of his baptism with the baptism of John. It is contained in the works which he did, which no other man did, and which were done in the power of the Spirit of God. It is contained in the words which he uttered, when he “spake as never man spake,” and spake by the “Spirit of wisdom.” It is contained in the wrongs he endured, sustained by the Spirit of grace and of comfort. It was shown in the Godlike forgiveness of those who oppressed him, and pursued

him to the death of the cross—when he blessed them, again and again, and in his agony, prayed for their pardon, to God, and cheerfully died in their stead. And, above all, it is furnished by the fact that his body was raised from the dead by the Spirit of God, and, by the same power, he ascended to heaven. And all these were performed with such force and authority, and such a clear manifestation of the fulness of the power of God, as to compel the submission of devils, as well as to secure the adoration of men. And in all these respects, he answered to “the prophecies going before,” which required that the Saviour should fulfil these predictions, and accomplish these things. What more could be required of the Spirit in bearing witness to Christ, than these open avowals of his perfect divinity in these wonderful things? What were they—but the “manifestation of God” in the flesh? What more could the Father have done, than declare that Christ was his Son? What more could the Spirit, but, in the form of a dove, in a tangible if not in a visible way, come down, and sit upon Him? What a crown! and who could be worthy to wear it, but the God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth! Oh, here is no doubtful assertion, no dubious light—the testimony is explicit enough—and the witness himself, who will dare to impeach? Any exercise of the Spirit of God, by one who was claiming to be equal with God, and to be the Saviour who should come into the world, is as much a proof of the truth of his claims, as the highest exhibition

of power—for in either case it is the gratuitous witness of the Spirit of God. But here, where the least gift of the Spirit were enough to sanction his claim, the evidences are crowded in rapid succession, and the assurance is made doubly sure. And if the rays have been single—and the light has fitfully fallen, before, in the times which preceded his coming—now, surely, they are gathered together, and the Sun of revelation has scattered the clouds, and come out from his chamber, and the Son of the Highest stands revealed in the meridian splendour, without a shadow to mar his proportions—in a glorious light, like that of the Transfiguration—only subdued, by the medium of sensible things, lest the mortal eye should be blinded.

The last period, is that which is still going on, of the gifts of the Spirit to the disciples of Christ, of every generation. Oh! what a flood of light was poured upon the character, and claims, and gospel of Messiah, on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came in living fire, and spake with cloven tongues! Too strong and clear, for a distorted, jaundiced vision to behold—for there were some who turned away, and sought the shades of earth, and the dark night of sin—but full enough, and none too bright, for penitential, tearful eyes, and the strong eyes of faith. But not less is the witness of the Spirit now, because the light has been diffused. It is less strong in any corner of the earth, than in the temple at Jerusalem, where first the Holy Ghost was given—but even with a milder lustre, its aggregate is more and more, as it

shines on to our day, and will increase, as it lights up, beyond, the impenetrable darkness of futurity. Behold it, in the characters and the achievements of the saints, who ever since, along the ages that have followed, have enjoyed his gifts—their meekness and their prowess—their trembling hope and their triumphant faith—their love—their charity—their deeds of most heroic daring—their submission unto death! These all, are testimonies, of the Spirit, to the divinity, and the humanity of Christ, for they are given in exact fulfilment of his promise, and thereby demonstrate both his power and his truth. Behold it, in the efficacious sacraments, and every hallowed means of grace, set forth by his command. See how the Dove (when properly invoked) descends upon the holy font! See, how he perches on the apostle's hands, and on the contrite sinner's head, in the holy rite of confirmation! See, how the testimony of the Spirit flashes from the "quick-forged" of the great sacrament? What can they not bestow? Birth—life—lifegiving, heavenly food—a hope fast anchored—faith in things invisible—faith which scales the battlements of truth, and takes the citadel of knowledge—a glorious victory in death—and life for evermore! these are the gifts, and witness of the Spirit. And these shall witness, at the last, for his divinity, and against us, if we refuse to worship him as God, and stumble in the day.

And now observe, my brethren, how all these distant rays combine, in producing the result—the

varied, living landscape, the harmonious whole—how he has so arranged it that the earlier witness of the Spirit shall mildly light the back-ground of the mountain, that its vast magnitude may be observed ; and so arranged the later light which falls in our day, this side of the meridian, that the “ prophecies which went before ” shall cause no lengthening shadow to be cast on us, or future generations, to hide its glorious form, or to deceive the eye ! See, how the truth projects upon the canvas—and the mountain of the incarnation stands before us, in the light of day—its breadth and everlasting base revealed by what has gone before, and followed the atonement—(by rays which fell among the former saints, within the night-encircled borders of Judea, and now fall upon the universal church—) its sides and summit bathed with light which falls from the meridian—its altitude unmeasured still ! How perfect is the revelation ! It is the justification of the Spirit ! None but the blind, can fail to see the fact of his divinity !

SERMON IV.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANGELS.

O Everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, so, by thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SERMON IV.

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*"Seen of Angels."*—1 TIM. 3 : 16.

AGAIN, dear brethren, we are suffered to approach the temple of the sacred volume, to resume our pleasing occupation, and to study yet another feature in the piece, where the Apostle has assembled several of the greatest mysteries, and most interesting truths of revelation, around the stupendous object of the incarnation! And, as we enter, let us look a single moment, (it will not delay us long,) upon the frontispiece which hangs here, at the portal of the Temple—where Moses, in the Book of Genesis, describes the work of the creation. I have a reason for this course which you will presently discover.

Look, where at first, a universal chaos reigns, before the birth of nature, and darkness broods upon the deep—while all the elements which are to constitute this lower world, and all the atoms which have just been spoken into being, are tossing in the wild confusion of the darkest, earliest night of tumult and disorder, on which the morning ever broke—a night,

impenetrable unto us, but for the light of revelation, which has since been thrown into the shades which lie beyond the morning of creation !

See, where the Spirit, with a generative power, is moving on the waters—and gathers the scattered atoms to their place, and gives them the warm pulse of life, activity, and order.

And now, the morning follows, and the bond which made the light and darkness one, is broken, and from that union which destroyed their individuality, the light and shade appear divorced for ever.

Now see, the ethereal arch of heaven, as it spans the yet tumultuous waste of waters, out of which the earth is to appear, and separates them from the waters which are above the firmament of heaven.

And now, as morning dawns again upon creation, ocean retires to its bounds, and the dry land on which shall be performed the woful scene of the transgression, and the amazing tragedy of the atonement—which shall become the theatre of God incarnate, of angels combating with devils, and devils wrestling with the souls of men, appears, adorned with every kind of tree, and shrub, and flower, and clothed in living green.

Now see, the rays of light, which heretofore have seemed to come from every where, (like arrows scattered carelessly upon the ground, or emptied slowly from the quiver,) are gathered to one brilliant spot, and form the orb of day—and how, for the first time,

the shades of night are now alleviated, and the earth half smiles in its repose, as the shining moon controls the darkness, and point after point of purest light pierces the veil !

And now, the sun with his warm rays, broods on the ocean, and lo, the great deep conceives, and bears the winged fowl that fly above the earth, and every living creature "that walketh through the paths of the seas."

And now, the mighty womb of earth brings forth the living creature, and the cattle, and the creeping thing, strong and perfected at the moment of their birth.

And now behold, the great Creator takes the dust of earth, and, as the potter with the clay, he moulds it to the figure of a man, and blows upon it with his breath, and man, a living soul, and in the likeness of the Deity, stands up the undisputed, and invested, monarch of creation.

And now, creation, and its Maker, are at rest—and the bright sun, as he ascends the sky, looks down upon a scene of wonderful tranquillity. Only, the trees are gently waving to the breeze, which bids them join the universal anthem, and bow their heads, in answer to the "morning stars" who sing together, and the "sons of God" shouting for joy—and man, and all the creatures of the earth and of the air, are uttering their melodies, and ocean, over which the Sabbath calm presides, looks up to the Creator, who "holds it in the hollow of his hand" as does an in-

fant in its parent's arms—and as the breezes here and there (which are the breathings of the Infinite,) create a dimple on its placid face, smiles upon God!

But come—we cannot tarry longer here, but must go on, towards the holy place and to the Altar-piece, to resume our contemplation. I bade you pause and glance a moment, at this frontispiece by which the portal is adorned, because, even here, in the earliest scenes of the creation, (as in the closing scene of time, they are the ministers of vengeance,) we find the “morning stars,” and “sons of God,” who are the “Angels” who will be the subjects of our study at this time, and are discovered every where, throughout the temple, in many of the paintings of the Spirit. You see them here—waiting on the Messiah—and witnesses of his humiliation—gazing upon the mountain of the incarnation—and here and there, upon their ministries of mercy, like the stronger of the children of the valley, in their ascent to heaven—resting upon the “Rock of Ages.”

“God was seen of Angels.” It shall be our object to consider and explain to you, in part, what is revealed to us of angels, and their connection, in the mind of the Apostle, with the doctrine of the incarnation. And yet it will be manifest to you, at once, that in a single dissertation, even if we might have no other object to pursue, we could do little, in displaying, for your learning, all that in Holy Scripture is contained upon this subject—much less when we must deal with them as the Apostle does, as witnesses

to fact. Remember then, that this is not intended as a disquisition on the nature and the offices of angels, (that boundless and seraphic theme,) but solely as an effort to develope, from the language of the text, what we suppose to be the object and the sense of the Apostle.

Shall we attempt to prove their origin, or their existence? The Apostle, on the authority of inspiration, here assumes the fact of their existence—and although, because belonging to another world, they may have been created many centuries before this world became the home, and then, the prison-house of man, yet all have sprung alike from the creating hand of God. They are revealed to us as spirits—high intelligences—enjoying knowledge greater far than we possess—living where no deep veil of flesh hides the effulgence of the Deity—as standing near the throne of the Eternal—knowing at least, his voice, and the glory which surrounds him, and the clouds which serve him as his chariot, and knowing too, the thunder of his indignation, and the lightning of his eye! Nay more, they “see him as he is,” and read upon his awful form, the lineaments of Deity! They are revealed to us, as being “an innumerable company”—holy, harmless, undefiled, incapable of error, or false-witness, or deceit—because they “kept their first estate.” Next to the God of all perfection, they are held up to us as objects of our imitation. We are required to call to mind their order and obedience—and to pray, “thy will be done on earth, as

it is done in heaven." Moreover, there are grades of being even among them, and an ascending scale—and while one common "bond of perfectness" unites them to each other, and to God, the lowest on the scale, the furthest link of the great chain of spiritual natures, reaching down from heaven to earth, is far removed above our own infirmities, and the highest comes not to the throne! How vast must be the population of the heavens! How bright, in all that constitutes a character of excellence, must be the angelic host! And how exalted the occupation of those who are servants to Him who "maketh his angels spirits, who fulfil his commandments, and hearken unto the voice of his word!"

And yet, the plan of our redemption, at which the unbelievers scoff, as if it were a thing contemptible—below the lofty reach of human wisdom—attracts their observation, and employs their ministrations, and even to angelic intellects, "the mystery of godliness" is "great." Yea, the world of spirits is described, as "put in motion" by the plan of our redemption—and in many ways, at frequent intervals, they ministered to Him who undertook to bear the load of our transgressions, and by his death to accomplish our salvation.

They were with him, in his long temptation in the wilderness—in the garden in his agony—and at the scene of crucifixion—from the beginning to the end of his eventful life. And we may well conceive of those, who still were kept above, (the "legions"

upon whom the Saviour might have called to fight for him, upon the night of his betrayal,) as stooping from on high to see the wondrous incarnation—as watching, from on high, the carrying out of the great plan, through all the actions of the Saviour, and the sufferings of the Redeemer—as stopping in their ministralsy, when the last scene was carried to its consummation, and the “sun was darkened,”—and the dying groan of the Redeemer ran along the vault of heaven, and for the first time, since the note of discord when the mutiny of Satan was discovered, and he was driven from the sky, broke in upon the harmony of heaven! Surely, we need not stop to quote the instances of their association with the Saviour, to prove the fact, that he was “seen of angels,” when you cannot read of his nativity, of his trials, or his death, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, without the story of their ministry;—from them mankind received the announcement of his birth in Bethlehem—from them his sorrowing disciples learned that he had risen from the dead, when they looked in upon the vacant sepulchre, and knew not where to seek him. These facts will not be called in question by any but the modern Sadducee, asserting that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit—or by the hardened infidel who will deny the whole of revelation. Divine or human—God or man—whatever were the attributes of Jesus Christ, the angels saw him in the flesh, and were companions in his pilgrimage. None can deny the positive

assertion—none reasonably doubt, that he who undertook to ransom us from death, and claimed to be, and so has been acknowledged by ourselves, the Saviour, while he was occupied in the great work of the atonement, was “seen of angels.” And, as yet, we have only asked, that you shall grant this fact, without involving the character of the Messiah, or, for a moment, acquiescing in the point of his divinity.

Thus much, at least, all those may say, who admit the inspiration of the Scriptures, that, the birth, of human origin, and the good life, and uniform example, the overflowing charity, the meek submission, the trials, the sufferings, the bloody sweat and passion, and, (if you choose, that we may seem to compromise or yield the point of his divinity,) the martyrdom of Jesus Christ, (for all concede him to have been a righteous man, and to have died unjustly,) were seen and known by those who are described as “Angels,” inhabiting another world, and of such purity of character, and clearness of intelligence, that we may confidently trust in their assertions, and, as witnesses, their testimony may at all times be believed and credited without reserve. And it is nothing more than the concession, that others than mankind, and God upon his throne, were witnesses of these transactions.

And now, if this be so, and even granted to be so, what consequence, suppose you, follows from the premises? for we come to that which we suppose to

be the drift of this whole passage, and the main design of the Apostle. Either he was divine, and it was God himself who was incarnate, or else the "Angels" too are guilty of rebellion and impiety, and patrons of a fraud;—rebellion against God, the only rightful sovereign of the universe, by bowing to another claimant of the throne—impiety, in sharing the society of one who had been guilty of so impious a claim—and fraud, in lending the influence of their authority to induce in man, a trust in a delusion, where his eternal welfare is concerned, and palming an impostor on the world!

What does the Apostle Paul declare? Observe the structure of this passage. It is God, of whom this declaration has been made. As if it had been written, "God was manifested in the flesh, and God was justified in the Spirit, and God, thus manifested in the flesh, was seen, as such, of Angels!" No frigid sense can be imposed upon this language, without making it, in fact, a senseless passage, and violating every rule for its construction. We believe that "Angels" minister to men—and that the barren fact, that they did minister to each and all of us, would never tend to prove our own divinity—but if we claimed each one to be divine, the open comfort and assistance of the heavenly host, and, above all, their adoration, would testify, that, in their estimation, we were gods; or else, the fact would prove their ignorance, or stamp them with impiety. And if the

pen of inspiration had declared that God became incarnate in some one of us, and that, thus manifested in the flesh, He was beheld "of Angels," it would be the testimony both of inspiration and the Angels, that such an one of us, was God incarnate, known and recognised of all. Not as they wait upon the saints, did Angels minister to Christ—their ministry involved their recognition of his Godhead, as plainly as their anthems, and the extorted adoration, the reluctant homage, of the spirits of the lower world. And the design of the Apostle is, to array them here, after the testimony of the Spirit, and in close connection with the circumstantial evidence which follows, as witnesses upon his trial! Behold, he is arraigned before the bar of human reason. And although he is the Lord of glory, yet he waives his power to mock at the tribunal, and withholds the uplifted arm of vengeance from utterly destroying his opponents, and here submits to trial. We wait for the conclusion of this series of discourses, to sum up the evidence in his behalf—we only mean to call to-day, among his witnesses, the Angels of the sky. Their competence shall first be shown—their acquaintance with the individual who has appeared, no matter whether by constraint, or willingly, before the bar. If he is God, they then have seen and known him in the courts of heaven, ever since the time of their creation. Throughout the empire of the sky, they know when they behold the insignia of royalty—they

know where to receive from Him the intimations of His will; and where to report themselves when their commission is discharged. They know where to bow down, and cover up the head, and worship, as His chariot of clouds is passing by. They know Him, when He opens wide his hand, and lets the tempest fly! We call them—the Apostle bids them come!

Behold, the “cloud of witnesses—” which throng the temple of man’s justice, and which fill the burdened air! They come, at the Apostle’s bidding—yea, at the feeble call of those who have received, in later days, the ministry of reconciliation—and bear the power of the keys. From the mansions of eternity, and from the recesses of the earth, they come—from where, below, they watch the infant’s slumbers, and where, above, they sing the spirits’ lays—from where they minister to saintly spirits, and where the trembling sinner prays—from where they stir the healing waters, cleansing those who enter there—and where they gather around the altar, and worship with the sons of men—from earth, from heaven—from every path by which they wander, from every chamber of the sky! We call them—the Apostle bids them come—“Angels of God, approach, and testify, as ye do know, and as ye are responsible to truth, to virtue, and to God. Swear, by the dark abyss of hell to which the devil and his angels fell, cast from above, and which is open still, to receive the apostate spirit who shall dare to vary or depart from truth, even in the ‘estimation of a hair.’ Swear, by the

throne, whereon Jehovah reigns, dispensing justice, unto Angels and to men. Swear, by the life of Him from whom your own existence flows, whose days are everlasting ! Swear, that the evidence which you shall give, shall be according to the truth, so help you God !” It is done. Now hear the testimony of the Angels. What know you of the truth or falsehood of the claims of Jesus Christ to be the Son of God ? Know ye the Man ? Is he the same, who laid the foundations of the earth, and stretched the line upon it ? Who laid the corner-stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ? With solemn mien, as those who weigh the import of their language, they reply, through Michael the Archangel, (while all the host are waving their bright pinions, to signify that they accord in all that he delivers,) We know the Man. We knew him, when the wondrous work of the creation sprung from his Almighty hand—ourselves (still further back, before that time was marked upon the circle of eternity) the creatures of his hand ! We knew him, when he sat upon the throne, and when, in the profound dilemma (to all intellects but his) created by the fall of Man, he shared the counsels of eternity ! We knew him, when we all were summoned to assemble, that we might hear the Father tell the plan for man’s salvation, and the cheerful acquiescence of the Son. We knew him, and a long procession of our Angel bands composed his escort from the sky, until he reached the shadowy borders of the scene of his hu-

miliation, and there, in our presence, he disrobed himself of all his glory, when he had left his everlasting throne, to be the object of the Father's wrath, the sacrifice, for the transgressions of the world. We saw him, as we waited on the borders of the kingdom, when he bowed himself, and threw the veil of your humanity over the radiance of his deity! but the veil which hid him from the view of sense, could not conceal him from his servants' eyes. We recognised, in all his works, the wisdom of the Infinite, and in his every deed, the power of Jehovah—and by these lights alone, we could have traced him, on his dark, and lonely way! We knew him in the wilderness, when he resisted the temptation, and the devil left him for a season, gathering the blackness of despair. He was the same who cheered us, in the conflict with the "Dragon and his angels," and when the victory had been accomplished, brought us nearer to the throne! We recognised the hand which fed the hungry multitudes, and the eye which pitied their distress—it was the hand which spread the manna in the wilderness, and gives to us our daily bread; and the same eye which lights the every corner of immensity—which flashed upon the serpent when he triumphed in the garden, then melted, for the calamities of man! We recognised the hand by which the blind received their sight—it was the same which gathered, in the orb of day, the wandering and scattered rays of light and "made the eye!" We knew the arm, which put aside the multitude who thronged

him, and who sought to take away his life—it was the same which bears, as very little things, the earth, the ocean, and the islands of the sea—which shakes with but a touch, the mountains, and the strong foundations of the earth! We knew him, when his dying groan reverberated through the sky—it was the voice, though strangely altered in his agony, which spake creation into being, and even now, commands, in trumpet tone, which can be heard by the extremest rank, the armies of the sky! We knew him, when we rolled away the stone, and, in our “robes of state,” we stood to welcome him, and he laid off the garments of his burial, and undid the fetters of the grave, and, unencumbered, walked away from the embraces of the sepulchre! We knew him, when we made an avenue for his reception, and hailed him, as in that same form, of crucified humanity, he passed along, through our opposing ranks to his accustomed throne—he was the same, though bearing with him, then, the trophy of his victory, whom we escorted from the sky! And we have heard him say, that he will come again to earth, and smite the wicked with his rod—and he has given us a charge, that all whom he shall designate, we are to bind, both hand and foot, and cast them into hell!!”

Now, ye have heard the testimony of the angels. What think ye of the “Son of Man?” What think ye of the testimony of the angels? Will ye deny their competence as witnesses? Can ye deny their knowledge? Dare ye question their veracity?

Compare your own with their abilities—compare your opportunities with theirs. Now, testify against them. Yea, God incarnate was not seen alone by men, who witnessed his humiliation—nor only justified by the Eternal Spirit—but the “innumerable company” of angels, by their added testimony, do confirm the truth. If you deny the knowledge of mankind, and urge that they have been the dupes of an impostor—we leave them, but the Holy Spirit, then, shall testify against you. If you explain away the witness of the Spirit, a “cloud of witnesses” are summoned to confront you! Deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, as well as his humanity, and lo! they throng around you, as the vindicators of his innocence of all impiety, and testify, on their experience, and protest, by their rejoicing, that he is divine! Only deny the incarnation, “God manifested in the flesh,”—and to the ear of faith, from every walk of earth, and from the whole expanse of heaven, and louder, from the cherubim whose wings are covering this mercy-seat, there comes one simultaneous voice of righteous indignation, defending the mysterious doctrine of the incarnation! Now, testify against them! Oh, when, at last, the judgment shall be set, before the assembled universe, and Christ (still clad in our humanity, although arrayed in glory, and having on the lacerated form, whose wounds, received upon Mount Calvary, declare and show forth his identity, and those who wounded him shall “look on him whom they have pierced”) appeals to those by

whom he is surrounded, be mine, be ours, to join with them in their confessions of his deity, and in their songs of highest praise, for his humiliation! God save us—save us, from the overwhelming verdict, which thy angel legions shall return!!

SERMON V.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE MINISTRY.

O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world; grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SERMON V.

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*"Preached unto the Gentiles."*—1 TIMOTHY 3: 16.

DEAR BRETHREN—in the course of subjects, on which we have entered, we take up, to-day, a theme appropriate to any day, but more especially to this, the nearest Sunday to the holy feast of the Epiphany, when the language of the text was verified by higher agencies than that of man—and when, a star from heaven published to the Gentile world the news of the Nativity, amid the testimony and rejoicing of the angelic host, who look with rapture and amazement on the wonders of redemption. It is a fitting theme, to dwell upon the later publication of the coming of Emmanuel—to tell, how the angelic song was caught up by the Apostolic band, and repeated for a thousand times, to all the kindreds of the nations; and how, even now, it lingers in the chords of revelation, and is awakened whenever a commissioned hand shall strike the harp of inspiration, it were appropriate for me to tell. So that, while I am developing the meaning of the text, in its connection with the other members of the sentence of which it

is a part, I shall be bearing on the subject which belongs to the occasion.

Come, then, and let us go again into the temple of the sacred volume, where we have spent, I trust, some hours of holy and intelligent delight—and where, so long as this temple shall be open for the inspection of mankind, age after age shall come, with an inquiring eye, and craving appetite, and feast the soul, and satisfy the longings of the mind. And even yet, I would not bring you hastily before it, lest you should fail to understand its merits, and reap but small delight. But if, on every day, as we revisit it, we pause to look around upon its glory, and, even hastily, to overlook, as we pass on toward the inner court, some work of superhuman excellence, and make ourselves familiar with its various scenes, while chiefly bent upon the study of some one—the gentle exercise will fit us for a closer meditation, and our minds and hearts become imbued with the spirit of the Author, and breathe the atmosphere of inspiration! We shall also trace elsewhere, in other groups and combinations, some of the features of the piece, whose contemplation we approach. I would not bring you suddenly before it, for it is the work of one whose spirit is unlike our own, whose genius is the author of creation, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, whose ways are not as our ways—and I know too well the value to the mind which is inferior to his by whom it was designed, of a moment's preparation, to appreciate it well.

Now glance, in passing, on that stirring scene, which hangs midway upon the southern wall, on which are gathered those which represent the history and lives of the Apostles. See, how that vast assembly gather round that stranger man—a crowd of learned men, of stoics and philosophers, ready to sit in judgment on his ignorance and folly, and anxious to know what his “new doctrine” is. He stands upon the summit of a hill, on which the multitude are gathered. His mien, so full of dignity and of authority, his countenance of fire and of love, his action and his opening words, have hushed them into silence, and riveted their whole attention. With eyes of hatred, and of unbelief, and scorn, and of credulity, (a mingled group of opposite emotions,) they hang upon his burning eloquence. Behold, he talks to them of God—for his look is upward, and in his countenance are seen the awe and the humility of one who knows the majesty, and feels the presence of the Deity—and, we may even gather, from the attitudes of those around him, (gazing, as they are, upon the earth, the air, the living tree, the floating clouds, the burning sky,) that he has spoken of creation, and by his words and actions, he has sought to lead man’s uninformed and clouded intellect, from nature up to nature’s God, and now is resting in the contemplation of the Deity, with his arm uplifted, and his finger pointing to the sky! See where the lip of scorn is curled, by some, in answer to his “foolish” declaration ;—see others, as they turn

away, like men who have been half-persuaded, and still are struggling hard against conviction—and others who are cleaving to that stranger man, as if already they believed ! It is the Apostle Paul, upon Mars Hill, the Grecian Areopagus, the highest court in Athens ! declaring to the heathen multitude, “ the unknown God ”—and, to the philosophers of Greece, the doctrine of the cross ! teaching the learned of mankind to seek the Lord, if haply, in their blindness, they might feel after him, and find Him—for He is not far from every-one of us. It is the Apostle Paul, fulfilling his great mission, and by his preaching to the Gentiles, contributing still further to “ the mystery of godliness.”

And, almost next to it, you see that scene of deeper colouring and fewer incidents, where only one or two are gathered, in the darkness, at the door of one who is watched and guarded by a soldier—and where the scene is only lighted by the solitary taper, which reveals the poverty of his condition, and the signs of his captivity. They look upon him with the deepest interest, and with amazement—for he speaks with earnestness and freedom, smiling in his captivity, and as he lifts his hands to heaven, as if he saw deliverance approaching, you may observe the chains with which he has been bound. It is the Apostle Paul—but in his prison-house at Rome, exhorting and instructing those who come to him for information—and sending the unbound, free word of God, to instruct the ignorant, and liberate, from a

bondage more severe than his, his own oppressors in the palace of the Cæsars ! His very bonds are made the occasion of his preaching, and become the text of his discourses, and turn out to the increase of the kingdom, and the furtherance of the gospel. He is the same, who, in the piece which we have been considering, mainly supplies, by his abundant labours, the feature which demands our contemplation at this time—for to him, above all other men, was it given “to preach unto the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ,” on land and on ocean, in liberty and in bonds, in peace and in peril, by night and by day!—

For, see, in this our study, where he appears again, with others his companions in the work, but foremost among all—(the head of a long line of Gentile ministry which stretches far away, towards the setting sun, and then is lost, unbroken, in the fields of time!) teaching the children of the valley, and ever pointing with an outstretched arm, towards the mountain of the incarnation, where angels, with their folded wings, rest on the “Rock of Ages”—and whose inferior earth, (even the dust of our humanity,) affords a softer tread, and safer footing for the faith of man to climb above the scenes of earth, to attempt the dwelling place of God ! To those who know how once the oracles of God were given only to the Jew, it is a wondrous spectacle. On this side, lies the home of ancient Israel, the land of their inheritance, and, once, the night-encircled region of

Judea—and lo! far off, among the unenlightened nations who have no part nor lot in their inheritance, he publishes the doctrine of atonement—he tells them of the mercy which for ages has been kept in store, while God has “winked” at ignorance like theirs, and of a just God and a Saviour—of sin, and death, and pitying love, and of the incarnation and atonement—he tells them that their path lies on the mountain, which is visible from every region of the earth, and which affords a place of refuge from all danger—and a covert from the storm—that if they flee unto the mountain, far below them, on the slothful and the unbelieving shall rage the hurricane, and fall the deadly rain of liquid fire—on Sodom and Gomorrah—and that, even if the angry sea again should break its bounds, and ocean roll its billows on the land, reaching above the waste of waters, the waves shall break upon its everlasting base, and break in vain!

“God was preached unto the Gentiles.” Our object now shall be, to show the meaning of this language, and wherein it forms a portion of the “mystery” of that great scheme for the redemption of mankind, which is described as “godliness”—for this, the preaching of the truth beyond the borders of Judea, is counted by St. Paul himself, who was the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” a wonderful thing. But there is more in this than the assertion merely that the Gentiles at length were suffered to hear the gospel’s sound. And he who only reads it as asserting

this, loses no little portion of the import of the language, forgets the general scope of the Apostle, and fails of perceiving the one great end he had in view. For I take it, that, besides that the structure of the sentence proves it, we must allow the Apostle enough of unity of purpose, and continuity of thought, not to have departed from his first intention, before he reached the close of this so brief, but most extraordinary passage. This member of the sentence is but another demonstration of the incarnation, and so much circumstantial evidence in favour of the manhood and the deity of Jesus Christ. And I shall undertake to show that it is so, by inference which cannot be resisted, and then, by the plain and necessary meaning of the text.

“God was preached unto the Gentiles”—this is the assertion as it stands. We take it now as meaning only God, in his relations to mankind as their Creator—or rather, for the sake of argument, and of the inference which is to form one portion of the demonstration, that the relation, in which he is here represented, is not defined. And that it would be lawful to derive from the expression, only the fact that the knowledge of the true God was suffered to extend beyond the borders of Judea—that Paul and others after, and conjointly with him, declared to them “the unknown God.” And this will be borne out by the language of St. Paul himself elsewhere, and by the stirring scene upon Mars Hill. This he certainly does say. It is included in his language, and is part,

at least, of his intention. The fact is not to be disputed. He did go out into the world to preach "the unknown God," and almost every land bears, in its "earlier formations" of truth and Christianity, the enduring impress of his feet! nay, almost every ocean bore him on its restless bosom, which would not be consoled, and, like a fretful mother's, tossed and heaved, as if to cast him naked and defenceless on a desolate and barren shore. The story of his journeys has been written by the pen of inspiration and beneath his jealous eye—and yet but little has been told us of his wanderings, and here and there some greater peril only, is portrayed—while even that which is recorded, takes within its ample range, the then known world. Even England, mother of us all, in blood and in religion, boasts, and with historic truth, (as testify, successively, Clemens Romanus, the friend and fellow-labourer of the Apostle, and Irenæus, and Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome, Chrysostom and Theodoret, and witnesses of later days,) that her own soil was consecrated by his tread; and by his Apostolic hand, was planted the small seed which afterwards became the great and glorious tree; from which our shoot has come;—and which has weathered many a tempest of oppression; and outlived the scorching rays of persecution, and the diseases which afflicted it, and marred its glory even to the ground, before the reformation, when enfeebled nature rallied and reclaimed her right, and the reviving pulse of healthful spiritual being, beat through its veins, and,

from its trunk and branches, scaled, and dropped, the scabs and incrustations of its sores; and which survives, even now, in greenness and in glory, manifesting vigour equal to the shoot, which has sprung up, and taken root in this far distant land;—and it is now more beautiful in holiness, and older, more time-honoured than the gnarled and crooked trunk of Rome, which strove, in ancient days, by stretching out its branches, to blight its neighbour's growth, and make it wither in its shade! We claim, ourselves, no very distant planting in this land—but claim to be a shoot from that great tree, now numbering eighteen hundred years, and so, through it, to have derived the life which circulates in our veins, from the Apostle's seed;—and fondly trust to grow up here, in spite of disadvantages, and notwithstanding the constant waves, of heresy and schism, which sweep across this fertile, but unguarded soil—and notwithstanding the intrusion of that gnarled trunk, which trenched upon our parent tree, and now sends out its branch, far over the Atlantic wave, beyond the boundaries of Italy, to blight us with its noxious shade!

But I must pause lest I exceed the allotted time. It is enough to state the fact, which will not be disputed. He laboured almost every where, and almost every where, the stately “trees of righteousness” bear witness to his diligence, and to his nursing care!

But now, since we have the fact established, and admitted, that he preached the gospel to the Gentile world, we are to inquire into the nature of his

preaching, and define what his "new doctrine" was. And this we shall be able to effect, without delay. I say his doctrine, because he was the head of the long line of Gentile ministry, and testified, when he inscribed the text, to what he knew, and had himself accomplished, and was "in labours more abundant than they all." He preached "the unknown God"—and taught, indeed, the unenlightened nations, to "look, from nature, up to nature's God," a Being infinite in his perfections, impalpable to sense, and "dwelling not in temples made with hands"—that all creation is his work, and, that, "the invisible things of God, were not made out of things which do appear"—but was this all? Was this indeed the burden of the message which he bore? Did he preach only God, a God of justice and of truth—and publish to mankind the law, which is "the strength of sin," placing them all at "enmity" with God, and never tell them of the "bringing in of a better hope," and of the way, devised by Him, and carried out by the Eternal Son, and, at all times, applied by the Eternal Spirit, by which "God can be just, and justify the sinner?" Nay, he could scarcely bear to lacerate and wound the hearts of men, and hide from them the "balm in Gilead, and the physician there." It must have been the burden of his teaching—and, in no other way, could he have stanch'd the tears, which his dark portraiture of human guilt, and the sharp scourge of truth had caused to flow! But hear his own confession of his doctrine and his oft repeated

boast, i. e., "I glory in the cross. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto us, who believe, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It was foolishness unto the Greeks—and you remember, that, when, upon Mars Hill, he spoke to them of "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," "some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter!"

Take, then, his own confession of the substance of his preaching, to the Gentile Greeks. It was of Jesus Christ—of Jesus Christ, as being the author and finisher of our faith, and of our salvation—as devising, planning, carrying out, perfecting our redemption—as the way, the truth, and the life—as able and willing to save. But yet, he tells us, that in preaching thus, he preached to them of God! He preached to them all this of Jesus Christ, and yet he uttered it of God! speaking of both alike—confounding individuals, if they were not the same! God was preached unto the Gentiles—when Jesus Christ was preached—not on the principle that God was represented by his servant, but preached as doing all himself that our redemption wanted, as giving his own life, which it was said that God had given, and yet which no one else could give, and no one else could take away! See, how, to every mind unbiassed, the conclusion follows from the premises—and how the inference of which I spoke is irresistible. How

could he else have preached "the unknown God?" How could he have declared him, in those qualities which are unknown, by nature, unto man, without revealing the mystery of our redemption; without alluding to the attributes of God, displayed in this our rescue?—for every thing we know of God, and every thing that we have ever heard of him, is written in the history of that transaction, is bound up with the tragedy of the atonement. The revelation of himself to us, is all for that one end, that we may be redeemed. He never yet inspired man—he never gave a blessing or a curse, but with a single reference to his great plan of our redemption! We know Him, only in connection with the crucifixion. The inspired volume is, from Genesis to Revelation, nothing but the story of atonement. It is here, that he is most "unknown"—and most inscrutable to human wisdom—where wisdom shines most inconceivable, and the great deep of love defies the measure of our passion, and the exhaustion of his healing flood—here, where not alone to man, but to the cherubim and seraphim, he still remains "unknown." The God of nature cannot be unknown, in this the highest sense of mystery—earth, air, and ocean speak to us of him—rocks, trees, and flowers, and fountains, and the living creatures of his hand, all speak to us of him, and the "invisible things of God, from the foundation of the world, have been known by the things which are seen." Each star of heaven tells the story of its origin—and every sailing

cloud bears on the reflecting mind, upon the path of Deity—and nature with her myriad voices tells us of his glory, and by her countless rounds of beauty and of being, plants at our feet a bright, ethereal ladder, upon which a child may climb! But here, and as a God of grace, he is “unknown.” The Apostle led the Greeks, without resistance, up to nature’s God, but when he talked to them of Jesus, and the resurrection, they rebelled! He who could reconcile offended justice, where there was no means of reparation—he who could love with such amazing love, after the sinner’s scorn—he who devised the way, and executed the atonement—he is the “unknown God.” When he preserves me in my being, and gives to me my daily bread, I know my Father’s hand—and when he rides upon the whirlwind, I can see the spirit of the storm—and when he walks down the untrodden sky, I see his glorious way—but when he overlooks my trespasses, and snatches me, a miserable sinner, from the gates of hell, and by the welling blood of his own wounded Son, Oh, then, is my God “unknown”—his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out! He must have told them of the incarnation, how God himself was there allied with man, or else, he never touched the great profound of mystery—he never could have preached the unknown God—he told them, that which they might read upon the ample page of nature, and left untold and unrevealed, all that they could not know!

But we must leave the inference, however irresistible, and briefly bring to bear the plain assertion of the text. It needs no lengthened argument—it only needs that I remind you of the true construction of the sentence, and at once the testimony is complete. The declaration is, that God was manifested in the flesh, in which he was justified in the Spirit, in which he was seen of angels, and, as such, (God manifested in the flesh, to reconcile the world unto Himself,) he was “preached to the Gentiles.” It does not mean—it could not mean, that God was preached abstractly, and in no connection with the time when he was manifested in the flesh; any more than it were possible for Paul to have hid the knowledge of salvation, and yet have preached “the unknown God.” This is it, (the “mystery” of God incarnate, for us men, and for our salvation,) which the Apostle preached. We have inferred that such was his new doctrine, and now the Apostle “tells us plainly,” and without a parable, that he had published God incarnate—for the text itself was written by his hand. It is the confession of his doctrine; by which five thousand generations have been guided, and for which he is to answer at the bar of God—and either God himself became incarnate, as the Apostle has assured us, or else (with all the angels, who are found false witnesses of God) there is reserved for him who preached a gospel which was not the gospel, who broke the law and taught men so, a re-

compense more bitter than the crown of thorns, or than the flames of martyrdom--even a lash of scorpions, and a fire that never shall be quenched!

Now, it is not necessary that we find a "mystery" in every member of this passage. It were enough that all which follow after the opening declaration should be shown to justify and to substantiate that truth. But there is mystery beyond--mystery in the fact itself that the truth was preached, and preached beyond the borders of Judea. But I can only tell you what it is, and not discuss it now. Rather there is a double mystery. It was amazing to the Jews, that God should now depart from his accustomed way, and send his oracles abroad--that they should be no longer stewards--and scattered as the truth was now to be, they wondered, doubtless, how the oracles should be preserved. They wondered that the Almighty should cast off the people whom he had foreknown. And Paul himself, as he proclaimed the tidings, when he started on his errand, must have felt a strange emotion, and wondered that the barriers were broken down. That mystery to us is cleared away--and when we celebrate the holy feast of the Epiphany, and think how we are brought to the possession of the truth, and through their unbelief, we are touched indeed at their calamity, but the only wonder is, in the depth of undeserved free love!

There is another mystery more great, (and it is the only further thought I shall present,) in that

the word was preached at all—in the selection of the agency by which the knowledge and the benefits of the atonement are to be carried to mankind! Behold, a world in wickedness, at enmity with God, and “dead in trespasses and sins”—and God atones for their transgressions by his own self-sacrifice, in human form, on the accursed tree. But man must first believe in the deep guilt of sin, and in the incarnation of Jehovah, and so apply to his own case, the remedy which is provided—and, (beyond the ordinary strivings in his spirit, even in the unrenewed,) there is no way for man to come to the possession of the truth, and to lay hold of this salvation, but by the preaching of the gospel, and the “ministry of reconciliation!” And God has blessed the preaching of the word, for man’s recovery, and, in a certain sense, has given it the power to redeem! for, “how can they believe in Him (not as a God of nature but of grace) of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher?” And is it not a mystery, that God should make the feeble ministry of man, the vehicle of the incarnate God, the bearer of salvation—that he who only preaches to his fellow man, and preaches with authority, not only brings him to the cross, (if he repent,) but brings the hallowed cross, still burdened with its bleeding victim, even unto him!—that when he tells him of the offer, and the plighted faith of God, his speech has power to make for him the incarnation, Jehovah dwelling in humanity! Yea, if ye could but hear it,

on the magic word of a commissioned minister, who tells you of redemption—for you, Mount Calvary draws near, with all the attendants of the tragedy, and from his wounded side, the awful and life-giving blood courses anew, so really, that you might see it as it falls, and bathe you in its stream! Yea, if ye could but hear it, on the weak but magic word of a commissioned minister, who in God's name has told you of the heritage of saints, and of the promises of glory, a light like that which beamed from holy Stephen's face, just entering eternity, (the face as of an angel,) like that which robes the saints on high, caught from the effulgence of the Deity, is shining round about you, (it is the fringe of heaven's glory—) and, in a measure, for a moment only, the sable veil which hides futurity, is drawn; and Christ himself appears in glory! Tremble—for ye have heard, again, the preaching of the gospel! Tremble—for we have brought you to the cross—yea, brought the gory cross to you! Look, on the extremity of anguish—look on him whom you have pierced! Tremble—for ye have heard again the offer of salvation! This day, the declaration of the text has been fulfilled!



SERMON VI.

THE HOMAGE OF HUMAN REASON.

Grant, O Lord, that, in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first martyr, Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those who suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

## SERMON VI.

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*"Believed on in the World."*—1 TIM. 3 : 16.

JUST before us, on the way towards the Holy Place, behold a scene of violence—where a vast multitude, (as if they had been roused to frenzy by the mention of some hated name, or else, had found the object of their cherished enmity, and were excited by the chase, and fierce to bring it to an end,) press on, upon a meek, defenceless, solitary man, and with revengeful eyes, and frantic gestures, and, apparently, with boisterous oaths, and awful imprecations, stone him, unto death—and he, weeping, as if in pity, and kneeling, as in prayer, and, seemingly, upon his parted lips, some fervent supplication, (at which the angry multitude are but the more incensed,) with outstretched hands, extended towards the sky, (as if he saw some being, visible to none but to himself,) gives back the treasure of his stewardship, his life, his soul, to God! And, at his side, there stands a young and zealous man, in whom the sufferer should have found a friend, holding the clothes of those who are the fiercest of the throng—

and so, consenting to his death! The one is holy Stephen, the first martyr of the church, permitted, for his meekness and his zeal, his courage and his constancy, to be the earliest of the gathered fruit, the head of all the martyr-bands, and the first to follow after the Redeemer, dying for his belief—the other is the future convert of the faith, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, the author of our text. And, in this scene, we have an instance, beautiful indeed, of the prevalence and power of the gospel, in the world, which he has here recorded.

Now, in the scene which we have been considering, the feature which attracts our notice, at this time, and which I shall propose, to-day, for your examination and reflection, is this same faith of man, represented by the ascent of multitudes of human beings, from the deep vale of our humiliation, up the stupendous mountain of the incarnation—finding in the humanity of Christ, a softer tread, and safer footing, a practicable way to climb to heaven upon the “Rock of Ages:”—where, if alone the solitary truth of his divinity, even, “a just God and a Saviour,” but with no revelation of the manhood of our Lord and our Redeemer, had been declared; for instance, if it had been asserted of the Father, (whom yet we only know in his relations through the Son,)—and so the rock had not been covered, here and there, by the earth of man’s mortality, we never could ascend. For, even as a God of nature, in his least sublime and least mysterious character,

in order that we may approach, at all, his residence in heaven, he has given us the works of nature, as the ladder upon which to climb!

How vain the effort, then, to seek for reconciliation in another way—to seek to approach, and feel familiar with the eternal Deity, without the help of our human nature to break the awfulness of his infinity—to strive to look upon the radiance of Deity, (the “light which no man may approach unto,”) unveiled by our humanity—to attempt to trust in him, as knowing our infirmities, without the assurance of his sufferings—to attempt to climb to heaven, only upon the steep, stupendous, uncreated, and unbroken “Rock of Ages,” on which, if we shall fall, we shall be broken. Even angelic natures, living far above this lower world, when their high intellects attempt the more immediate home of the Divinity, do mount by the continuous ladder of creation! beyond where human sight attains, and far beyond the highest round of life and beauty, on which our feebler natures rest; and then mount up upon the steps of most refined and spiritual being, which he has placed around the footstool of his throne—and yet approach not to Jehovah’s self! The exhibition of this faith, by which the preaching of the cross has been received, shall occupy us at this time.

“Believed on in the world.” Taking this language in an ordinary and a general sense, and disconnecting it from all which has gone before, we should derive from it nothing but the simple declara-

tion of the success and progress of the gospel. And doubtless, there are many careless readers of the Scriptures, who see, in this expression, no greater depth of meaning. It has undoubtedly a reference to the reception of the gospel by mankind. And without departing widely from the text, I might go on to speak of frequent instances of its effect, and of the exhibition of a Christian faith. I have described to you the martyrdom of Stephen. And I might tell you of St. Paul himself, and follow him upon his journeys, and through all the perils which he braved, and all the hardships, the stripes, the bonds, and the imprisonment which he endured, and how he held fast his confidence, steadfast unto the end, and, like St. Stephen, won a crown of martyrdom. And I might tell you of a thousand other instances, which may be gathered even from the records of the period when that Apostle preached and laboured upon earth. And, passing individuals, I might go on to nations, where he and others, with the same authority, proclaimed the gospel to the world—and fairly urge, that in the eye of prophecy, the word of inspiration, not only would those portions of mankind who had believed already, but also those who should afterwards believe through their word, have been intended. I might go on to tell at length, and in detail, the spread and triumphs of the gospel every where. It were indeed a glorious theme, if called to it on this occasion, to paint the long triumphal march of Christianity, through all the kingdoms of the

earth—over their people, and their princes, and their power—victorious, ever, over sword and cross and burning flame—with a long train of captives of all nations, and the spoils of every people—reaching from oriental climes beyond this western region, and from the birth of Christianity to our day.

It were a sadder theme to tell, that though the onward movement, and the mighty march of revelation still continues, and truth is still victorious, yet, here and there, the ranks are broken by the adversary, and, here and there, some portion of the spoils have been reclaimed—to tell how looser discipline and weaker faith prevail, even where the truth is most triumphant—and how the glorious armour of the saints now shines more dimly than at first, as if they all were soiled by their long march, and by the dust of ages—and how, as if the perils of the march had thinned the ranks of Israel, and many a soldier of the cross, unharnessed through neglect, without his shield, without his helmet on, had perished, in the thousand strifes through which their progress has continued, the church militant of our day presents a spectacle of tarnished glory and enfeebled strength, scantily covering a smaller field, by an extended line, scarce able to outflank the undiminished hosts of unbelievers, the allied army of the world, the devil, and the flesh, by whom the advance is every inch disputed, who rally and renew the fight as often as they are defeated!

Deeds of heroic daring might be told, however,

of those who are contending—and the still unwavering constancy of the embattled ranks. And, if the occasion called for it, no limit need be put to our reflections but the lapse of many centuries, and the boundaries of the world. Each valley, and each eminence of time—and every mountain pass between the cliffs of ages, and every fortified position of the enemy, would have its thrilling tale of conflict, and of brilliant victory. More than the world which Alexander knew, than all he even sighed to know, that he might conquer, the gospel of our Lord, the great fact of Christianity, the church of God, has overcome. Yes, infinitely more—for ever since the commencement of its march, the places of the hosts of those who have opposed it, and have either fallen in the conflict, or been taken captive by the forces of the kingdom, and been, in time, permitted to put on the armour of the saints, and take their stand beside the soldiers of the cross, have been supplied from the resources of the enemy, and by the increase of mankind—so that it may be said, that every generation, born as they are, at enmity with God, has been another force to be encountered, and gathered to it the surviving remnants of the last, and stood up in the room of that which has departed. When Alexander sighed, it was because the opposition ceased—and there was nothing more to be accomplished—there were no inexhaustible resources—the races of mankind were not renewed within the hour of his victory—nor could he stay until another world might

be prepared for his aggression. And when he conquered all he knew, he sighed for further occupation. But the church of God, or Christianity, or else the blessed gospel, whose armour is of light, whose blade is truth, whose champions are the meek, and whose victories are blessings to the vanquished—is never satisfied—nor has to long for other combatants—and never rests—its conflicts do not end—and while the world itself shall last, although its movement shall be onward still, and fiercer conflicts should be followed by still greater victories, yet, ever shall the generations of the foe spring from the gory ground, and from the ashes of the vanquished !

All this might be described, and we might pause upon it with absorbing interest and profit. But this was not the chief design of the Apostle—and it becomes us to forbear, and to beware, lest we misrepresent him, and fail to perceive and to exhibit his intention. The allusion in the text, if any, to the great progress of the gospel, is only incidental. He does not mean so much to say that multitudes believed the gospel, as to assert that “God was manifested in the flesh,” and prove it by another argument derived from the fealty of human intellect, the homage of man’s reason, as so much circumstantial evidence in favour of the doctrine of the incarnation. When it was written, the work which even this Apostle did, had not been all accomplished. And the argument, though cumulative, by reason of the multiplying instances, and the subsequent extension

of the kingdom, is yet complete as the Apostle left it, with the facts which had transpired.

We shall establish such to be the true interpretation, again, by the plain import of the language, and then by inference amounting to a demonstration. The argument, upon the sentence as it stands, may be conducted briefly. If in the preceding clauses, the structure of the sentence has required the several declarations to intend, that God, as "manifested in flesh," even in human form, was justified, and seen of angels, and preached unto the Gentiles, then still we must retain the same interpretation. One grand and leading thought possessed the mind of the Apostle—it was the wonder of redemption, as effected by the incarnation, so that he who was to suffer for mankind, might die with all the pangs of dissolution, and, that humiliation witnessed to, by God's good Spirit, and the holy angels, and the preachers of the cross, who carried to mankind the benefits of the atonement—and now he adds, as other testimony to the fact, as well as another feature in the mysterious operation, the unfaltering faith and homage of mankind. He means to say, that they to whom the gospel had been preached, the plan of our salvation been propounded, received implicitly the truth, that God came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, for us men, and for our salvation. He means to say that this great mystery of godliness had been received, and, in receiving it, mankind had added to the mystery—and in accepting

human faith, that God had made the mystery still more profound. And surely, on this portion of the argument we need not dwell.

But now, again, we have established, in the last discourse, and by a necessary inference, that the substance of the Apostle's preaching when he declared "the unknown God," was a God incarnate, and so, "a just God and a Saviour," (for God himself must have put on humanity to be the sacrifice for sin,) and hence it follows necessarily, that since they believed what he declared to them, they must have credited that "God was manifested in the flesh"—preached unto the Gentiles—believed on in the world:—the same was published and received—the same in all his attributes, and in his flesh, and in his passion, and in his mighty resurrection. He who was preached, inscrutable in wisdom and in grace, he was the God believed. And here we may safely rest this portion of the argument.

Again, we gather such to have been the gospel which the world received—that they believed on God as manifested in the flesh—from the conduct and expressions of some of those whose history is given, and the circumstances of whose death have been recorded—of men who had the opportunities of knowledge—"filled with the Holy Ghost"—men who were taught by the Apostles, yea, had likely been instructed by our Lord himself—men who received the doctrine of the spirit's immortality, and of a future state of punishment and of reward—men who would not trifle

with their everlasting interests, nor in the hour of death approve a falsehood, when the admission of the opposite, asserted as the truth by their opponents, would have saved them from the anger of the enemy, and from a cruel death. If these, the friends, and fellow-labourers of the Apostle, do own themselves to have believed in God incarnate, then surely, testimony such as theirs, will prove that such was the Apostle's teaching, and such the faith which they received from him, and such the meaning of his language in this place. And is there, can there be, a doubt of that which was the substance of their faith—the faith of those who first received the gospel, and first suffered at the hands of men, for his sake who had called them out of darkness into light? For an example take the martyr Stephen. See, how the holy record has preserved the exhibition of his faith. See, how his dying declaration is an evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and of his faith in him. See, how the brief and simple exclamation of that faithful man has been, to all the church of God, a heritage of comfort and assurance, and served to rescue his name from heresy, his memory from reproach! He died in haste, but not before his testimony had been given—and not before he proved, by all the light of knowledge, and all the earnestness, sincerity, solemnity and truth which the approach of death itself is able to inspire, that manhood and the Godhead met, and were for ever married, in the Son of man! For while they gnashed upon him with their teeth, he looked

up steadfastly to heaven, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And then they stopped their ears, (lest they should hear his blasphemy—for they well understood his meaning was that Jesus was divine, which made it blasphemy to those who had rejected him, and that he meant triumphantly to say, he knew in whom he had believed,) and ran upon him and cast him out, and stoned him, "calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" Enough—enough—he gave his own immortal soul into the hands of Jesus Christ, and staked his hope of happiness and heaven upon the fact of his divinity, for when he appealed to Jesus, he was "calling upon God!" Did he commit his soul again to any but the one who gave it? to one who could not save? Did he, in death invoke the anger of Jehovah, that he might spurn him from his presence, and his kingdom, and cast him into outer darkness, and bind him with a rebel's chain, by boldest mockery of his supremacy, and by exalting a mere creature to the throne of him who will "not give his glory to another?" Did he, as, homeless, houseless, and defenceless, he was entering eternity, defy the anger and omnipotence, and rouse the jealousy of God? Did he, in solemn mockery, sport with the awful character, and dignity, and power, of that great Being whose presence he must enter, and whose protecting shield he wanted for his preservation, and into whose sustaining, "everlasting arms" he threw himself, declaring, in the

presence of the enemy, his confidence and his security? Then did he meet the scorner's doom—then did he utter blasphemy—then did he perish everlastingly—then heaven, which had seemed to open wide its gates of glory, and reveal his ever-present help, and his inheritance, was closed on him, for ever—and the night which settled on his spirit as he passed away, was one whose dismal shades are deepening through eternity! He had no plea of ignorance—he knew the certainty of what he should believe—and if he erred, and taught men so, profanely holding out in death, a mightier “Stone,” even the “Rock of Ages,” upon which he fell, shall fall on him, and “grind him into powder.” At least, we must allow that he himself believed the language which he uttered. This case is but one instance of ten thousand—and is a fitting case to represent them all. And, representing other instances, it proves what the Apostle has recorded, that, the mysterious doctrine of the incarnation was not only preached, but was believed.

But, now, if the Apostle did not, mainly, mean, in writing that it was “believed on in the world,” to dwell upon the wonderful success and progress of the gospel, for what purpose, in connection with what goes before, does he record the fact? Why, doubtless for more purposes than one—to which we shall allude. The fact that it was so received, will teach us, first, that though the mystery is great, it should not be declared to be repugnant to the reason of mankind—but only a doctrine so above our reason, a

theory so far beyond the reach of our invention, that, while our wisdom could not have discovered it, our reason may approve, our faith may apprehend it. The fact that it has been received, goes far to silence the objections of an unenlightened and perverted understanding—because, it was received in circumstances likely to test its consonance with reason, and by honest and sincere and reasonable men, in whom it is recorded that the Holy Spirit did reside, enlightening their understandings, and held, by them, as not at all opposed to reason—as in keeping with the other movements of Jehovah, and with all his intercourse with man, as they have been made known in revelation. In a word, the fact which he records, assures us, that this same doctrine of the cross, which our understandings have approved, was so approved by human intellect, and human hearts, in the beginning, and is indeed, although so full of mystery, not only a divine, but rational Christianity. It tells us that mystery and reason are at one—they have been reconciled—yea, that reason will itself require in the plans and operations of Jehovah something unlike the “foolishness” of man, such as becomes a God. Self-willed, and “heady” men will not receive the doctrine, because they could not have devised it. And why? because man’s reason is to them a god, and they will own no wisdom which is greater. If these be right, what shall we say of those and of their understandings, who in the olden time believed, and had good opportunities of knowledge, and received the

commendation of Jehovah? And we believe, as they did, not that reason could itself have found this way, "in which God can be just and justify the sinner," but, that the plan, when it has been revealed, fills all the mind with an amazement, at its wisdom and efficiency, but commends itself to human reason. It is as if the Apostle had declared, "this mystery of godliness is great," that God became incarnate, but the Spirit testifies to its reality, and holy Angels witness to its truth, and I believe it, and am lost, in admiration of the wisdom which devised it, and I have preached it to the world, and they too have perceived its wisdom, and credit that which passes human understanding.

The language also teaches us its wisdom and its power, because there is implied the evidence that they believed, found in their happiness and conduct. This point deserves far more development than we can give it now—only let this be said—to speak of human faith, is to speak of what it does—and to record the faith of the disciples, is to declare the adaptation of the mystery to human want. It is to say that there appeared in those who had received it, the fruits of holiness which it was promised to create—affording comfort—and allaying fear—and giving hope to drive away despair—making the way of our salvation plain, and tangible to all.

And yet, as forming part of the great plan by which the creature shall be reconciled to the Creator, it is a mystery indeed. Behold the "mystery" of

faith, of faith which you possess, of faith which you have seen. It is a wondrous thing, that God has made the faith of man one instrument of his salvation—that he has given it a place, within that scheme which called for the exertions of the Deity, and employs the ministry of Angels. It is a wondrous thing that there should follow, upon hearing, faith which reads the things invisible—faith which can appropriate the sacrifice upon the cross, and make a God incarnate! “Believed on in the world”—it is to say, that sin is pardoned and the sinner prays—that bonds are broken, and the prisoners are free—that the doctrine of atonement has achieved the mastery—and death and hell are robbed of victory! Wonderful plan—so simple and majestic—so wise, and so profound, and so omnipotent! Shall we not help it onward by our own obedience, and by the homage of our understandings? Shall we not shout its praises? we, to whom the doctrine of the cross has been propounded—we, for whom the sacrifice itself was made—we, who believe it? That Jesus Christ was God, is our persuasion. We will abide with Paul. We will abide with the “believers.” We will confess the faith of martyrs. We will die with Stephen. “Lord, we believe—help thou our unbelief.” A false philosophy has cast us out—wilt thou receive us? “The stones” of “evil speaking” do assail us—be thou our shelter. The night, the night of death is near us—stay with us, till the morning.



SERMON VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ASCENSION.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

## SERMON VII.

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*"Received up into glory."*—1 TIMOTHY 3: 16.

It is with a feeling almost akin to sadness, that I draw towards the conclusion of this subject, which has occupied my mind and heart so often and so long. I feel almost reluctant to approach, again, this graphic sketch of the Apostle, because we are to study and contemplate the only remaining feature of the piece—and, this visit is to be the last. For I have loved, dear brethren, for your sakes, and my own, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, whose manhood and divinity are placed in such relief, this perfect and amazing exhibition of the plan of our salvation. But I remember that the tidings are not limited to but a single declaration of one messenger of God, but the same truths, though, it may be, not stated so concisely and so comprehensively, nor in the order which has been adopted here, are scattered all along the Spirit's way, upon the pages of the Bible. Although not equal, it may be, in our opinion, in the light and colouring and grouping of the features and the objects, on the sacred canvas, and, in their complex

design, to this our favourite—yet there are multitudes of other scenes with which this temple is adorned ; at some of which we have already tarried, I trust, with interest and with delight. And, I feel that we have, even now, but hastily considered this great work—and that, to-day, we shall not be able to do justice to the feature which remains,—reviewing as we must what we have said before, and summing up the evidence in the behalf of the divinity of Jesus Christ—and briefly discoursing of the “mystery” of the entire plan. But, the expression which becomes, in turn, our text upon this day, is not alone the termination of the passage, but supplies the closing act of the manifestation of the Son of God, and may well shut up our own discourse upon this most absorbing theme. He was received up into glory—and I would, but dare not hope it, that this feeble effort to vindicate his wisdom and benevolence, and his claim upon the homage of mankind, might rise with him, and plead for me, and for you all, before his Father’s throne, that we may share his glory, and be with him where he is !

Our course shall be, first, to consider the only remaining feature of the piece, and then to recapitulate the arguments of the Apostle, and then to state the plan of man’s salvation, made up of these component parts, which it was also the design of the Apostle to present. We have already dwelt upon the mountain of the incarnation, as it is composed of earth, and of the Rock of Ages, and have seen it ris-

ing high above the ridge of mysteries, giving to human faith a safe and practicable way to climb to heaven. And we must now consider the greatness of its elevation, and speculate upon the glory of that illimitable space in which its top is lost, and follow with the mental eye, the fading outline of the peak, until it disappears !

“Received up into glory.” It becomes us, in advance, to ascertain the meaning of this declaration, touching the form and substance of the individual, whose ascension is recorded—and then the doctrine will inevitably follow, and we shall see how the recorded fact becomes yet further circumstantial evidence of the great doctrine of the incarnation, and harmonizes with the arguments and testimony which have gone before.

The language, like the rest of this whole passage, (as has been already shown,) can be applied to no one else than Jesus Christ. And surely, after the previous repeated demonstrations of this fact, we may be, now, permitted to assume it. It is of Jesus Christ, then, that the Apostle has recorded, that he was “received up into glory.” He was alluding to the scene at Bethany, when from the midst of many of his followers, and in the light of day, and in the midst of his instructions to the chosen few, who were especially to represent him upon earth, he was seen to go up into heaven—the history of which occasion has been given by this same Apostle in the book of Acts, which was composed by his companion, and

beneath his truthful eye. If so, and it is Jesus Christ who is intended, we have, at once, a double evidence that, whatever was his nature, whether angel, or archangel, or some still loftier intelligence approaching nearer to the throne, or God himself, or only man—he went up in a human form. For, both the holy record has declared it, and the senses of those men who kept him company, all the time that he went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, to that same day that he was taken up, and whose testimony, with such opportunities of knowledge, we are compelled to credit, bear witness to the fact. Doubtless in human form he suffered on the tree—when he forsook the grave, and his spirit returned to earth from the abodes of the departed, he proved to them his own identity, and satisfied them of his resurrection, when he ate and drank, and walked and talked with them upon earth, and suffered one to see his mangled body, and bade him thrust his hand into his side—for “they knew that a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as they saw him have”)—and at the very time of his ascension, they had gathered round his visible, and tangible, and consecrated person, and being taught of him, of things pertaining to the kingdom, they received his invocation, and felt the very breath of life—and had his parting benediction. And this, dear brethren, is enough of testimony on a point which will not be disputed; nothing of our poor humanity—of all that can degrade him, and deepen his humiliation, will be

denied him. And we, too, will insist upon the truth of his humanity, because it proves his own capacity for suffering, his fitness for the sacrifice for man, and the depth of his amazing condescension. But though it is admitted by the adversary, we chose to establish it by better evidence, and suffer nothing to depend, alone, upon his forced concessions, which may at any moment be withdrawn.

But, was he only human? Besides the abstract testimony of the Scriptures and their further evidence by such assertions, as, unconnected with the point in hand, would prove the divinity of Jesus Christ, and that "in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—three several arguments establish it, which are derived directly from the text. For, you remember, that the structure of the sentence requires us to carry on the individual, of whom the opening member of the sentence speaks, to every member of the passage—and that the only sensible and possible interpretation requires the declarations which succeed it, to be each and every of them predicated of the individual of whom the first is made, whose name is the only name of any being who stands in that relation to this passage! If all along, the robe of our mortality, and the testimony of the Spirit, and the Angels, and the ministry of Christ, and the fealty of human intellect, the homage of man's reason, the tribute of his faith, have been predicated in succession, of the Almighty—then has this closing declaration been intended of the same; and we must read,

that God was received up into glory, when, (for it confessedly refers to the Ascension of the Saviour,) "the Son of Man" was taken up. What follows—what can follow, but that God himself and Jesus Christ are one—the divine and human natures dwelling in the man?

Again—he who was so received on earth as we have seen, and claimed, himself, to be divine, predicted his departure, (as he foretold all other things which should occur to him, and happen in the world,) and that ascension was to be accomplished by the exercise of God's omnipotence, which could not thus be exercised, but by the Almighty's acquiescence. No creature can wrest from Him His power, and in its greatest energy, to palm a lie upon the world or to confront Him, in defiance, in the very heart of His dominions—and so to hurl him from his throne! It were a monstrous and irrational suggestion, that a man might, even in the height of his ambition, and in his rebellion against God, despise the distant warfare, and rising, by an energy which is divine, fly in the face of God. Oh no—a being not divine and in the form of man, claiming equality with the Creator, if suffered to sport awhile the figment of his royalty upon the earth, could never enter into heaven. Oh, do not so degrade the nature of the God whom we adore, as to suggest, that either a pretender could exercise against his will, his own omnipotence, or that he would lend the impress of his power, to so great hypocrisy. Oh, do not so insult the reason of

mankind, as to suggest, that a creature could assume the reins of government of the wide universe of God, or that Jehovah could sit down with a usurper, on his throne. And yet, he claimed equality with God, and angels testified to his divinity; and man, who must be saved or lost thereby, and who depends for his salvation on the truth, believed the claim—and still, he was “received up into glory.” We boldly take the stand—and join the awful issue:—we must believe the divinity of Jesus Christ, or else deny the truth of God, because he was confederate with him—and, to our mind, at least, the alternative of faith in him, as the eternal Son of God, coequal with the Father, is Atheism—worse than infidelity. Take from me the divinity of Jesus Christ, to which the Father has set to his seal—and I shall wander on, a raving maniac, with a soul which craves an everlasting truth on which it may repose, and is maddened with the disappointment, and is tossed in ceaseless anguish, on the changes and the chances of this mortal life, and the fickleness of the divinity, and the uncertainty of an eternity—or else become a reckless libertine in time, and plunge at last into an unconscious nothingness, a hoped annihilation. Leave me, Oh, leave me, but a God of truth, whose promise is secure, whose witness is sincerity itself, and whose word shall stand for ever.

Again—we are to gather something more, in way of argument, from the assertion, that he was “received up into glory”—for he himself spoke of the

nature of that "glory" into which he was to be received. He spoke of it to his disciples as the glory which he had with God, before the world was; and called it his own glory, although it was described to be the incommunicable glory, in which Jehovah dwells. We are not left in doubt of his reward, nor of his destination—to the highest heavens—to the throne of God—and to his right hand—to exaltation greater than becomes a creature—to the same robe of radiant light which belongs to the Creator. And he who is familiar with the Bible, and has a mind unbiassed by false theories of doctrine, and anxious to discover what is truth, will see, at once, (we are persuaded,) that when the Apostle says, he was "received up into glory," he means to introduce no matter that is new to those to whom (through Timothy,) his letter is addressed, nor to speak of a state of glory, of which they have not heard, pertaining only unto Christ—but to remind them of the consummation of that plan for our redemption, in which they were instructed, which started with the emptying himself, by the Eternal Son, of all his "glory," and was to terminate again in its resumption; and to declare, that in his human form, bearing along with him the trophy of his condescension and his victory, and by the everlasting union of the natures in his person, reconciling fallen man to his Creator—he was received up into that glory which belonged to him of right from everlasting.—For mark you, brethren, his main design is, here, to as-

sert the exaltation of our human nature, in which lies the recovery, for which he condescended to become a man—and, to show that exaltation, he says, that in the person of the Saviour, our nature did ascend, with Christ, into his glory ; the brightness of that glory having been revealed. So that, the elevation of our own humanity being the chief object in the present instance, in the mind of the Apostle, and his glory mentioned only as the state to which that nature had been carried, and mentioned as a state already known, even the state from which, they had been taught by him, he had descended—he assumes, as an indisputable truth, the very basis of his declaration touching our humanity, the doctrine of his divinity. As if I should declare, that by an earthly king, (whose power and supremacy were known,) an individual was taken to his glory, (to share with him the splendour of his royalty,) I need not add a full description of his power or magnificence, it being understood—so the Apostle, starting with the assumption that the disciples knew the fact of his divinity, declares, that not without our poor humanity (the representative of all by whom it has been, or has yet to be inherited) he entered into glory. While the fact that our nature was thus carried up, becomes another argument to prove the Incarnation.

How wonderful the “mystery !” How passing human understanding ! It has increased with every stage in the development and execution of the plan,

until a climax, almost inconceivable, is reached, in the astounding declaration, that, a clod of the valley now lives in the climate of heaven—that a corruptible has put on incorruption, and a mortal frame is wearing immortality—and a body, (like the fretted covering of our spirits,) which once was nourished upon earth—then buffeted and smitten with a reed—then torn and pierced, on the accursed tree—then buried in the sepulchre—and bearing, even now, the marks of violence inflicted by mankind, (the pledges of that suffering by which a world of lost immortal spirits are redeemed,) is seated on the throne. It is an awful mystery—at which, we hope, and weep, and tremble, and adore. It is a consummation worthy of redemption—a climax which becomes a God—a mountain peak of mystery, far down whose sides the clearest, stroughest ray of human intellect must fall—and which hides its summit in eternity.

Yet who will dare to doubt the mystery? Who, who will barter this invaluable truth? Who, that cares aught to have a hope, fast anchored in that which is within the veil, will throw away this pledge of immortality? Part with this sacred truth, however great the mystery, and you give up the assurance of redemption from the power of the grave to the body's resurrection; and, I know, ye would not be unclothed upon, and ever flit, like spectres, through eternity. Part with this sacred truth, and you give up the confidence which it supplies, that God can feel for your infirmities. And with it goes the assurance, which

is linked inseparably with this truth, of his continual intercession. You give up every thing worth having in the present life, which is an earnest of the future—for then we have lost sight of our Redeemer, of the form which suffered on the cross as an atonement—for, where, oh, where is our Redeemer? If he is not in the heavens, tell me, oh, tell me, where ye have laid him—and I will take him away.

Now let us briefly recapitulate his arguments—and sum up, before we sketch the plan in its perfection, the testimony in favour of the incarnation. Because the time is short, and trusting also to your own remembrance of the past, I shall recite, with great rapidity, the evidence which has been brought before you. And also governed somewhat, I confess, by my persuasion, (which must also be your own,) that any portion of that evidence, of itself, would be sufficient.

He starts with the confession that “the mystery of godliness is great”—and with the positive announcement of the doctrine of the incarnation, in the fact which is alleged, that “God was manifested in the flesh.” We waive, for argument, the advantage to be gained from his assertion, in language so direct, which will be seen, at once, to be of equal weight with any other evidence—himself a witness—an eye-witness—of the whole—and in his testimony guided and preserved from error, by the teaching of the Spirit, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But for the time, though not for ever, we waive this fair advantage—

and go on to cite the evidence, by which this declaration has been proved.

The doctrine, of the incarnation of Jehovah, stands arraigned before the bar of an enlightened reason. And the question as to the divinity of him who so became allied to our humanity, is to be decided, for the present, by such witnesses alone, as are supplied from Holy Scripture, and are enumerated here.

You will remember, that a multitude of witnesses appeared, in the earlier Prophets, and in the works of Jesus Christ; and in the persons of the Apostles, who lived when he was present upon earth, and in the later ministry, and in the saints of every age, whose triumphs have confirmed his prophecies, which were dependent on the truth of his divinity; all "holy men of old, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" all, with one voice, while giving in the testimony of the Spirit, by whom they had been moved, confirming his divinity—confirming it, not only by applying to him epithets, and giving to him attributes of Deity, but some foretelling him by marks which he afforded, and others owning him as Christ when he had come—and others testifying, in the ages which succeeded, that he indeed was Christ—all bearing witness to him as a "holy one"—all vouching for his words, as those of truth itself—who, yet, professed himself to be divine. Nay, more than this, the Holy Spirit, in the midst of his impiety, (if he were not divine,) by a loud voice from heaven en-

dorsed him as sincere, and as the "well-beloved Son." The Spirit came, not only by his representatives, delivering the words with which they had been charged, but, lest uncertainty might be imputed to his ministry, he threw aside the agency of man, and through the opening cloud, which screened him from our mortal sight, his voice of approbation fell, like a star, from heaven. His witness is direct, and unequivocal, and his testimony cannot be impeached.

Then, we went on to summon other witnesses, and "an innumerable company of Angels" responded to the call. They came from earth, and heaven, and the far home of Deity where they have seen the emblem of his royalty, and know the radiance of his glory—from where they bow with awful reverence, when his chariot of clouds is passing by. And to the question, "Do ye know the man?" (while all the host were waving their bright pinions, to signify that they accorded in all that he delivered,) they replied, through Michael the Archangel, We know the man. We knew him, when creation sprung from his Almighty hand—and when we formed his escort from the sky—and when we sung his birth in Bethlehem—and when, upon Mount Calvary, we saw him die. We knew him, when his spirit went, and came from the abodes of the departed. We knew him, when we rolled away the stone which kept the entrance of the sepulchre, and we saw him rise up, as a giant from a night's repose, and loosing the bands of death, and laying by the grave-clothes of mortality, he

walked away from the embraces of the sepulchre, while we, adoring, bowed to earth, in homage to his majesty. We knew him, when we received him back again, and he passed along to his accustomed glory, bearing beyond the reach of death and hell, your ransomed nature, as the trophy of his victory. We know him now, the King of kings, dispensing justice unto angels and to men, the centre of the universe, the God whom we adore. Such was the testimony of the Angels—beings of more ethereal nature, and of intellect more bright—purer than man. There was no want of clearness in their testimony—no ambiguity of speech—no inconsistency—but a full consciousness of knowledge, and of truth—and their testimony was delivered, with the certainty, that they must, in a moment, meet the Being whose character they had described, and bear the scrutiny of God's unquenchable and sleepless eye. Their testimony cannot be rejected, and stands next, in value and in order, to that of the Eternal Spirit.

Then came the preachers of the cross, whose sound has gone into the world, and in the fruits of whose abundant labours we rejoice—and we examined them, through their great representative, the head of the long line of Gentile ministry, the Apostle Paul. They testified, through him, that from the Law and from the Prophets, and from the Holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ himself, they had received the doctrine of the incarnation, and proclaimed it to the world, and staked their all, for time and for eternity,

upon its truth—and, as witnesses, their credibility must be apparent from their opportunities of knowledge, and from the constant influences of the Holy Spirit, and from the persecution which they cheerfully encountered, and the noble sacrifices, of all temporal interest, which they continually made. And, when we pressed the examination of the substance of their preaching, and demanded, if indeed they published to the world his full equality with God, and held him up, as, even on the cross, in his humility, and more, in his ascended majesty, entitled to more than human honour, even to the worship of mankind, a voice, almost of indignation, seemed to burst from the Apostle, and to be swollen by the protestations of the long succession of the ministry, as it came down the track of ages, until it reached this hallowed house, in which we are assembled, and my voice, (as I stood up to tell you of “a just God and a Saviour,”) was blended with the volume of that testimony, and prolonged the sound!

Then came the world—at least so many as received the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. And Stephen rose, to represent the substance, and the purity and strength of human faith. He spoke of Christ as God. He called upon him as Jehovah. He prayed to him, in their behalf who rushed upon him to destroy him—and, as he passed into eternity, into his hands, as into the hands of his Creator, he gave back his immortal soul! His testimony was delivered with solemnity, for with it,

he breathed out his life, and ratified it with his blood. Through him, the world, who have believed, did own their faith in Christ, as our Emmanuel, and certify that so the doctrine was delivered by Apostles—and pay to it, by its reception, the homage of their understanding, proclaiming it not only a divine, but rational Christianity. And when again the question was repeated, (as if there could be left in human minds a doubt of the true faith of the disciples,) it seemed to me, that every valley of the earth, and every mountain, rang with the response of millions of the living, and that the earth was heaving with the restless ashes of the “dead in Christ,” (who wait the resurrection morn,) until they rose, and asked, “Why have ye dared to trouble us, and to molest our slumbers? Will ye assail the ground of our confidence? Will ye remove our hope?” And, when the world of the believers responded to their remonstrance in the confession of their faith in Christ as in Jehovah, they retired to their graves.

Then came the testimony which relates to the inspired history of the ascension—which ye have heard to-day—in which the Holy Spirit, and the Angels, and the ministry, and man, with his confiding faith, each bear their part. It is enough—it needs, it can require, no further argument. And ye, O men of knowledge and of understanding, in your obedience, and holiness of living, and in your fervent prayers to him, as your Creator, will be found the verdict ye shall render, as touching his united natures, the

humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ. And I remind you, that for the verdict ye must render, be it for him, or against him, ye are to be responsible, to the enlightened judgment of mankind—and to the church on earth—and to the souls of the departed—and to the impartial justice of the Judgment day.

The parts of "godliness" which are the features of the piece, compose this simple, but mysterious plan of our salvation. Because man could not save himself, God undertook his ransom. He became incarnate, that he might become a sacrifice for sin—rescue our bodies from the power and corruption of the grave, and so restore us to the place which we had lost, by taking human nature into union with himself. The mode of the atonement was revealed to holy men of old, and is recorded in his word, and, by his gifts, has been confirmed to us for ever. To certify us more, and raise our estimation of the wonderful achievement, angels are suffered to express their admiration, and corroborate the fact. And, then, a church is founded, and a threefold ministry are set in order, with the power to perpetuate themselves to every generation, to publish to mankind the tidings of salvation, and help them to lay hold on Christ, and of eternal life, by word, by deed, by holy rites, by sacraments, and prayers. And, then, with all this evidence before them, men are required to believe in Jesus Christ as both their Lord and their Redeemer, and show, by fruits of holiness, a living faith, by which they shall be justified—by which

they shall be saved. Then death shall have no power to destroy them—and then humanity, raised up, in incorruption and in glory, shall, after death, ascend up into heaven, where he has gone before, both to prepare the way, and signify to us the excellency of “the recompense of the reward,” in which both soul and body shall partake, after the judgment day, for evermore.

Wonderful plan! so simple—yet effective—so mighty, and profound. Who will deny that “the mystery of godliness is great?” Think you, that after all this exercise of wisdom, this long-suffering, this condescension, and this lavishing of blood, Jehovah will bear, with patience, its rejection? Could human reason have devised it? Can human understanding now impeach it? Can human recklessness discard it? Think you, that he who will disparage the performance, shall be partaker of the benefit? Think you, that he who will deny its “mystery,” deserves its mercy?

And was it for us, that this humiliation was accomplished, and all the agony and the reproach endured?—for us, the Holy Spirit witnesses?—for us, the angels testify?—for us, a Church was founded?—for us, Apostles preached?—for us, that Jesus intercedes?—and, that we too might follow him, and share his glory, where he is, he went up in the lacerated form, still unrecovered of its wounds, in which he suffered on the tree? Oh! greatest mystery of all! It is the worthlessness of

man which makes the love so wonderful—the mystery still more profound. It is the immeasurable depth, to which the divine compassion stoops, by which its greatness is revealed. It is because it rests upon the earth—that we can trace the mountain of the incarnation, to where it bathes its undiscovered top in heaven.

“Lord, we believe—help thou our unbelief.”

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered; make us, we beseech thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let thy Holy Spirit lead us through this vale of misery, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives; that, when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope; in favour with thee our God, and in perfect charity with the world: all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





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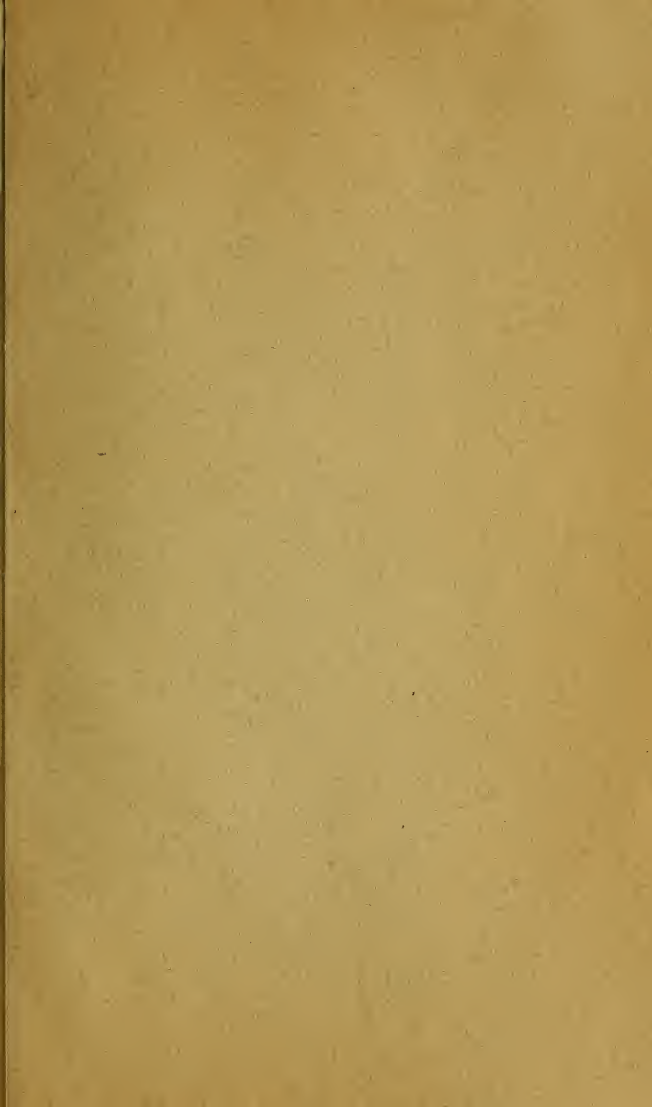














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